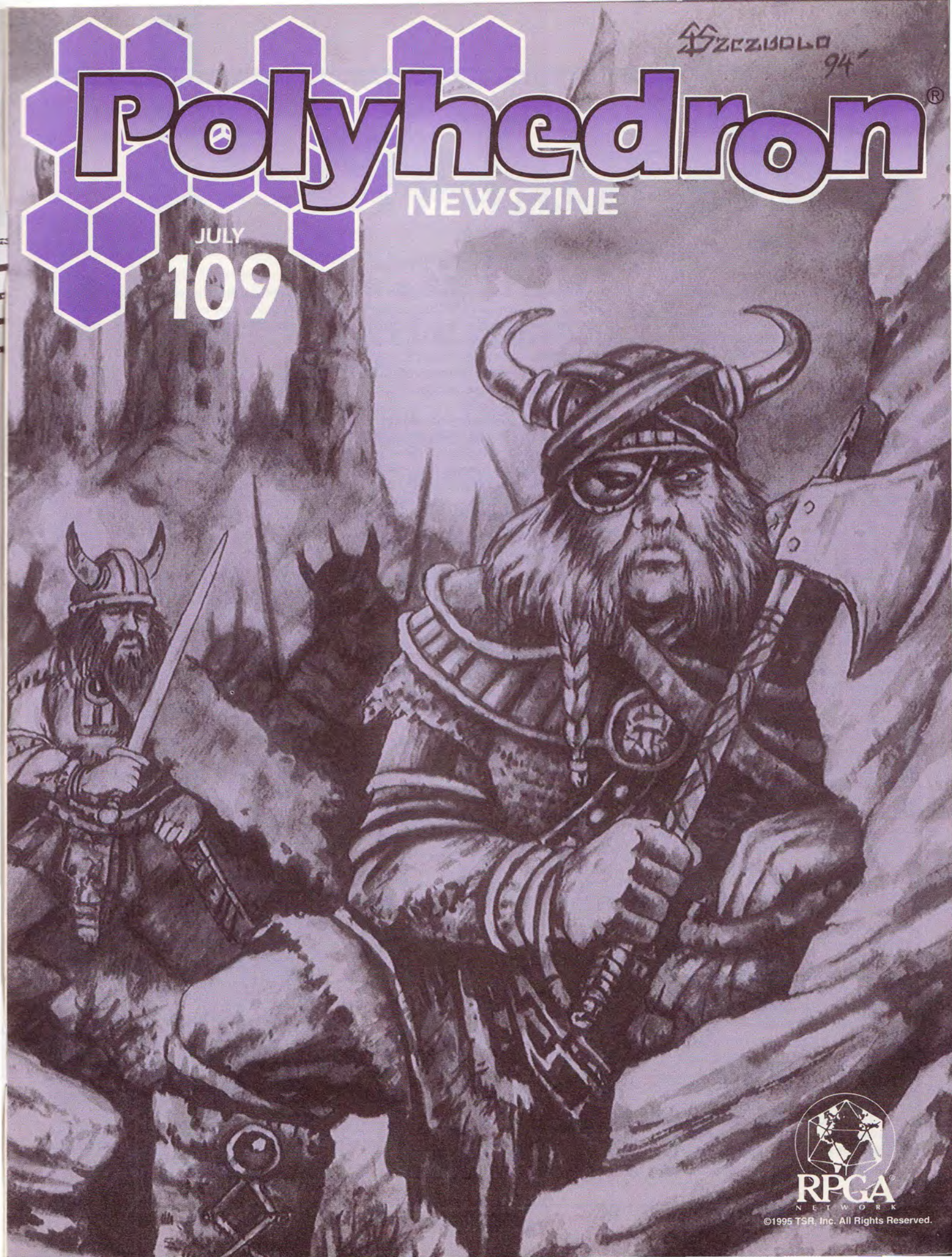
Polyhedron®

NEWSZINE

JULY

109



RPGA NETWORK

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Notes from HQ

What's Really Important

HQ is contacted about a long-time member of the Network battling a life-threatening illness. A member calls to find out why his points haven't been updated. A Regional Director asks for permission to run special benefit games for the Oklahoma City bombing relief fund. A LIVING CITY™ player sends a letter to HQ asking why his character can't have the Bladesinger kit.

These are the kinds of things that have crossed my desk this month, and I'm certain similar things will in any given month. Each is important, but a few deserve priority attention. As I undertake the position of coordinator here at Network HQ, I am learning just what sorts of things I can and cannot do.

I believe I came to this job to do one thing, really: to make the Network even more responsive to the members' needs. And I ask you to assist me by telling me what about the Network is genuinely important to you.

The previous Network coordinator, Jean Rabe, has provided us with some significant tools. We now have over 40 Regional Directors, and over 120 sanctioned clubs, to help us communicate with members. The Newszine comes out monthly. Dozens of excellent tournament submissions come in every month, and many of the best of these grace the tables of conventions around the world. Network memberships and tournament results are entered more regularly and expeditiously than ever before.

We'd like you to tell us what's important because we'd like to provide the services that ensure your renewal. We are about to embark on a new program with the Mail Order Hobby Shop that will offer you bargains on selected merchandise, including TSR's newest items. We especially want to provide improved services like this for those members who don't often go to conventions.

Like Jean before me, I come from the membership. I don't have a degree in marketing, business, or psychology. I've primarily been and continue to be a game player. I think that members are important because I am one. And I think that people are what makes the Network what it is. Not more than four months ago, I was just an active member. I had some disagreements with Network HQ, but I was still willing to work for the future of the Network. Then I was offered this opportunity: either to be quiet, or to do something about it. I chose the latter because I want to maintain the Network's mission, and maybe help redefine it.

This is my understanding of that mission: the RPGA® Network is a social organization that provides a wide range of programs for the benefit of its nearly 10,000 members. At the heart of the Network is our tournament program which provides member-written tournaments for over 200 conventions each year, including the WINTER FANTASY™ convention.

The tournament program gives members opportunities to receive recognition for their writing, judging, and playing skills. The program also includes the Living Campaign settings, including the new Threads of Legend setting introduced in this issue. Our tournament program provides one more important sevice: the opportunity to raise money for worthy charities, which helps improve the public image of the gaming hobby (besides, it's the right thing to do).

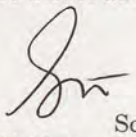
Another meaningful benefit the Network offers is the opportunity to make friends at conventions, or through the Classifieds section of the Newszine.

The Network also maintains a point system of scoring for judges and players, which is intended to give continuing members the chance to play with more experienced and enjoyable players and judges.

Tying all these programs together is the Newszine. We'd like to produce the best Newszine for our members that we can, but we really would enjoy the input of the membership in deciding what kinds of things we might publish.

Now I ask: What is important to you? What made you join the Network? What will keep you renewing? What do you want more of? Less of? Do you like these programs? Dislike them? Do you want to see something else? As you express your opinion, you are going to have an impact on the future of this organization. So you have a choice to make. You have the same choice that I did: to build the Network, or to sit by the wayside and watch others do it.

Join us. It'll be a hoot and a holler.



Scott Douglas
RPGA Network Coordinator

Calling All Judges!

The Network needs a few more judges for selected events at the GEN CON® Game Fair. To insure that everyone gets to play in the events they sign up for, we need judges for the following events:

-- AD&D Masters—Role Reversal
-- AD&D Grandmasters—The Sewers of Justhaven
-- AD&D Paragon—Eusauria
-- AD&D RED STEEL™—Savage Steel
-- AD&D Living Jungle—Plague
-- AD&D Living Jungle—A Stitch in Time
-- AD&D Living Jungle Team—Lair of the Headshrinker
-- AD&D DARK SUN® Special—The Night the Dragon King Died
-- Kromosome AMAZING ENGINE®—Death in Venice
-- Star Wars Feature—Prophets of Otherspace
-- Shadowrun Virtual Seattle—Sweet Dreams

Oops!

In Issue 107, we made a couple of errors in our *Shadowrun* Virtual Seattle articles. On page 10, under the Lifestyle section, the first two lifestyles end with "See Healing." Ignore these; they were a reference that changed in the final version of the article. On page 15 and 16, in the "Primed Runners" article, the spell lists for the Sorcerer Adept and the Mage or Shaman include Mana Missile, Stun Missile, and Sleep. There should be an "or" between each of these. The lists should read Mana Missile OR Stun Missile OR Sleep. With this change, the spell points should add up correctly. Sorry!

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Ruin seize thee, ruthless king!
Confusion on thy banners wait;
Tho' fam'd by Conquest's crimson wing,
They mock the air with idle state.
—THOMAS GRAY, *The Bard*

About This Cover

Maybe nobody ever told the guy who annoyed these dwarves that dwarven vengeance is not something to provoke lightly. As their leader eyes (pardon the pun) his prey, his army prepares to offer a reminder that it is best to be polite when dealing with dwarves. The painting is by Tony Szczudlo, and is courtesy of FASA Corporation.

Forgotten Deities

Sharess

by Eric Boyd

Power: Demi
Plane: Arvandor
AoC: Excess, lust, free love, sensual fulfillment
Align: CG
WAL: Chaotic
Symbol: Feminine lips
Sex: Female

It is believed that centuries ago the goddess Sharess was a western incarnation of the long since forgotten Mulhorandi deity known as Bast. Bast, goddess of cats and pleasure seekers, is believed by scholars also to have been worshipped in the north centuries ago as the beast cult deity of cats known as Felidae. These legends are supported by the tendency for most images of the goddess to be depicted stroking a black cat. Some tales claim Sharess is the younger, more decadent sister of Sune, goddess of beauty, love, and passion. The clergy of Sharess claim that their goddess lives with Sune and the elven goddess Hanali Celanil in Arvandor bathing in the waters of the Evergold, although this claim is hotly disputed by the clergy of the other two goddesses. Regardless, at some point the portfolio of the goddess Sharess was seized by the Mistress of the Night, Shar. Sharess's symbol is feminine lips carved from dark amber or ruby and worn on a golden chain on the wrist or ankle.

During the Time of Troubles, Sharess was rumored to have taken as an avatar the favorite mistress of the Pasha of Calimshan. The Pasha is said to be a great devotee of Sharess, and little was seen of or heard from the ruler during the Avatar crisis.

Sharess's Priests

Shar views mortal worship of her aspect as Sharess as the first step in an inevitable corruption and slide toward evil. The clergy of Sharess contains numerous "fallen" priests and priestesses of Sune, and Shar secretly delights in the weakening of another rival Power. Sharess's priests are expected to live their lives in the decadent sensual fulfillment of themselves and others. Many run pleasure houses in large cities or directly serve decadent rulers. Although humans make up the majority of the clergy of Sharess, elves, half-elves, and the rare halfling may also become specialty priests. Males of any race are limited to at most 10th level as specialty priests of Sharess, but females may advance until reaching racial level limits. The clergy of Sharess is split evenly between clerics and specialty priests, with the balance slowly shifting in favor of specialty priests. Alignment restrictions for clergy are weak with a slide towards evil tolerated (encouraged?). (Truly evil priests often secretly shift their worship to Shar, while maintaining their positions within the clergy of Sharess.)

AB Chr13*; **AL** Chaotic; **WP** whip, staff, dagger, net; **AR** any, as long as it is provocative (clergy particularly favor garb from *Aurora's Whole Realms Catalog* in the section entitled Boom's Garden); **RA** lingerie; **SP** All, Animal*, Chaos, Charm, Creation*, Elemental (Water)*, Healing, Necromantic*, Protection; **SPL** nil; **PW** 1) one bonus NWP selected from singing, dancing, artistic ability, or musical instrument, 2) charm/fascination 3/week (see PHBR3), 3) charm person (W1), 9) memory wrack (P5)(see *Tome of Magic*); **TU** nil; **QS** change sex (as per girdle of masculinity/femininity on touch, see DMG). ❑

illustration by Phillip Robb

The Ravens Bluff Trumpeter

Town Fair to Be Held

Earlier this month, Ravens Bluff Town Fair Board member Mitt Lamber unveiled plans for this year's extravaganza. Held on the site of last year's phenomenally successful bazaar, the fair will include archery and jousting contests, a mud-brawl, ax-throwing and log-rolling matches, storytelling and poetry festivals, a baking and cooking competition, along with many favorite events from past fairs.

Winners of each contest will receive a trophy prize, and the most frequent winner will be awarded a grand prize, which will be announced at the fair. Last year's grand prize winner, building inspector Gildensturn Shakspear, was presented an ornate weapon of great size, and the fair board promises the grand prize will be even finer this year.

Booth space is still available, according to Lamber, and requests will be processed in the order in which they are received.

Crowd Protests New Amusement Park

A coalition of citizens yesterday protested a zoning board decision allowing DMI Incorporated to go ahead with the proposed Discount Merlin's House of Critters in Ravens Bluff.

The group, led by a company of angry mothers bearing hand-drawn pictures of their children, attacked the board's decision, asserting that the city needs a more thorough investigation of the proposed facility's safety measures before approving the project.

"Sure, they say that it's going to be escape-proof," complained one obviously anxious mother, Elena Kerlin, "but with all those monsters they're collecting, one or two are bound to get out." DMI refused to comment on the protest.

The Ravens Bluff Zoning Board previously approved a request from DMI Incorporated to rezone the location formerly occupied by the Chemcheaux magic shop. The city had rezoned the site from C-2 (light commercial) to C-5 (entertainment), allowing construction of the proposed adventure park, pending the purchase of the property from the previous owners, who were unavailable for comment.

Municipal Case Update

After completing an extensive investigative hearing, Magistrate Justin Valerius yesterday retired to reexamine an earlier decision by the zoning board that refused to allow DMHOC to employ sentient undead. Attorneys for the city of Ravens Bluff declined to comment on the hearing, but DMHOC officials expressed confidence that the outcome would be favorable. "DMHOC is an equal opportunity employer, dedicated to providing opportunity for all deserving citizens of Faerun, even the living-impaired," said DMI Chief Executive Officer Connor-of-Galway. "Our sentient undead employees are individuals cursed with, perhaps, some unfortunate connections to the Negative Material Plane, but their tragic addictions to blood or life energy should not prevent them from functioning in our society. The Magistrate's decision could be a great victory for civil rights, and should provide hope for the non-living everywhere."

During the hearing, of-Galway argued, "This is not good versus evil; it is discrimination, pure and simple." The city attorneys countered with, 'But...but...they're vampires, your honor! They're evil blood-sucking fiends! We can't have them running around the streets!"

In a related story, the city magistrate delivered a setback to DMI when he chose not to reconsider the city's adamant refusal to allow DMHOC to build their proposed expansion, the "Tarrasque Room." DMI officials claimed they had discovered the location of the super-powerful tarrasque, which is currently asleep. City officials, concerned about what would happen if the monster woke up inside Ravens Bluff, denied the expansion until DMI could produce an acceptable Environmental Impact Statement on the attraction.

When asked how DMI found the tarrasque, a rather testy of-Galway replied, "We're powerful sorcerers, you idiot! Would we be doing this if we weren't? What do you think we are, charlatans trying to gull funds from the incredulous?"

DMI Sues "Discount Merlin"

DMI Incorporated filed a complaint with the Chief Magistrate titled DMI Incorporated v. John Doe a.k.a. 'Discount Merlin'. In the last two years, a mage with that pseudonym used temporary magic items to bilk cash and magic from local adventurers. The lawsuit charges the mysterious criminal with trademark infringement, fraud, and intentional infliction of emotional distress. The company seeks 1,000,000 gold pieces in compensatory and punitive damages.

DMI CEO Connor-of-Galway stated, "As you know, we here at DMI are in no way associated with the nefarious criminal known as Discount Merlin. That name was registered with the Chief Magistrate as our trademark long before that blackguard smeared it. His depredations have made it difficult for our firm to operate in this fine city. We only hope this dark-hearted scoundrel is brought to justice someday. When that day comes, we'll see him in court!"

❑

Elminster's Everwinking Eye

First Look At The Border Kingdoms

by Ed Greenwood

In the last few columns of this unfolding farrago of Faerûn's regions we've examined Turmish, an often overlooked but fascinating backwater of the Realms. Its pastoral beauties are many, but unto my ears have come the cries of adventurers thirsting for more lawle—er, freedom-loving territories better suited to brawli—ah, adventuring. And south and west of Turmish, hard by the Lake of Steam in a warm and pleasant clime that all too few folk in Faerun have experienced, lie just the thing they're looking for: the Border Kingdoms. So let us turn our attention thence, and perhaps adventurers perusing this column will find the place they've been looking for.

The Border Kingdoms are little more than names on a map to most folk of Faerûn. Only a few learned sages and energetic merchants can tell you anything useful about them. This is due in part to their everchanging nature and also to the peril of their incessant wars with each other and with land-hungry satraps of Calimshan. All this martial activity discourages travel through the region except in large warbands.

The sage Meriadas of Westgate is typical of most sages in his knowledge of the area, so let us hearken unto his words for a time:

"If Turmish is the place people go who want to disappear from society and live quietly and privately in these the known lands of Toril, the Border Kingdoms are the most favored destination for adventurers who want to proudly and boldly conquer a realm or establish their own new kingdom. Lords, counts, dukes, kings, and emperors rise, proclaim themselves, and are swept away with the speed and regularity of waves crashing upon a shore. What comes to our ears here (and, I daresay, to much of the rest of Faerûn) are a stream of amusing or colorful little tales of their most daring, disastrous, or funny deeds.

"Few folk go to the Border Kingdoms except those who want to carve out a place for themselves with a sword—or in the westernmost reaches of this region, fight Calishites. Borders and even the names of the realms they define change with each passing month and even tenday. There is no such thing as an accurate history or even a map of the Border Kingdoms. The paucity of geographical stability is why, despairingly, some learned man of Sembia gave the Kingdoms the unlovely name they now bear—because they stand in the way of Calishite expansion and their turmoil and stubborn strength define the eastern border of that proud realm.

The Border Kingdoms? Overgrown villages where rogues and adventurers brawl and posture, lad—in short, a place like most grand realms in this world!

—Mrin Trabbar,
Prespiator of Ilmater in Ormath
in a speech to Bastable the Prophet
Year of the Harp

"Many folk have argued about precisely where these debatable realms begin, but learned folk generally agree that the Border Kingdoms are the land south of the Lake of Steam that lies to the east of the Strait of Storms (sometimes called the Suldolphor Strait or the Wide Water); that is, the passage of water that empties the freshwater Lake of Steams into the dolphin-roamed, salty shallows of the northeasternmost stretch of the Shining Sea. From that shore (where Theymarsh faces Suldolphor across the rushing waters), the Border Kingdoms spread east and south to take in all the lands drained by the River Scelptar as far as the Shieldmaidens (the hills at the western end of the Firesteap Mountains and just east of the Duskwood) and the rising land that defines the northern edge of the vast rolling grasslands known as the Shaar.'

"If you're following my words yet and have a map before you, you can readily see that the territory I've encompassed takes in the independent settlements of Derlusk, Selpt, Themasulter, Theymarsh, Thur, and Yallasch, and not only the Scelptar river valley but the entire Duskwood—tangled haunt of stirges, owlbears, and living predatory trees that it is. As to just what people rule there now and what they're up to—besides fighting—I cannot say. To discover such things, seek out no sage, but go there yourselves and learn. Take strong spells, trusty friends, and sharp swords, and you may live long enough to take a brief look around."

Cheery words from Meriadas, to be sure. I pressed Elminster (who has avoided the area except for brief visits he made to it some time ago concerned with meeting lady adventurers known to him) to press him for something—anything—that sages around the Realms could tell us of the history of the place. All we learned was this: "The region is reputed to be riddled with wild magic, much as a tattered cloak covers most but not all of the beggar beneath it, as a result of an ongoing chaos of Art said to have been born of a battle between Azuth the High One and Savras the All-Seeing. Some of the spells they hurled at each other still

Border Kingdoms
THE LAKE OF STEAM
THE SHIELDMAIDENS
MIDDLE MUKSHAR
HIGH MUKSHAR
NETHER MUKSHAR
Derlusk
Yhtym
REALM OF THE SMOKING STAR
Alamontyr
Taermbold
SHANDOLF HYN'S REACH
Felshroun
Thur
Arthyn
Waernd
Themasulter
Splondar
The Duskwood
THE SWARD
ONDEEME
Luthbaern
The Neth Stand
HIGH EMMEROCK
Qurth Forest
Black Alblade
Dunbridges
Sorndorn
BARONY OF GREAT OAK
Sprynt
Theymarsh
REALM OF THE READY SWORD
Arnglar
GRAND DUCHY OF SHANTAL
BARONY OF BLACKSADDLE
Thort
Bloutar
Ospreth
Oeble
OWLHOLD
THUNTAR
Beldargan
Telcharn
Manywaters
Irl
River Rith
SWORDPOINT STREAMS
TALDUTH VALE
Myrinjar
Jundarwood
THE REALM OF THE MOUNT
HAWKGARTH
Emrys
ADAERGLAST
Rymdyl
Yallasch
Blackbarn
River Selptar
THE LAND OF TWO PRINCES
SULDAMMA
Selpt
Gallard
Dapplegate
BEDORN
THE SHAAR
Oparl
THE SHINING SEA
100 Miles
N
Map by Brian J. Blume
Elements of Frame are Copyright 1994 by Artbeats

hold sway today and others slumber only to awaken suddenly when the unwary work magic too near to them.

"Of other, lesser battles, the most notable would have to be the fray in which Aglar, reputed to be the son of the god Malar, was cut to ribbons and devoured by priestesses of Lolth from the Borderer drow city of Naernth-Dar. Minstrels also sing of Hamnor the One-Handed, the paladin of Tyr who scoured the last of those priestesses from the surface world and ordered that their city be torn apart by magic so that no trace of it remains.

"There are also many tales of squabbles between adventuring bands or duels between bold and mighty individuals. In the Duskwood, Aranth of the Seven Spears slew the infamous pirate and adventurer Ortass of Hardcastle. Thelmer the Spellstealer was hunted down and destroyed by the Red Wizards of Thay. The Thayans never found the unique spells he stole from the library of the dead Zulkir Thalomeade (who crumbled to dust while teaching a class of young mages) and are said to still search the Border Kingdoms for traces of the hidden spells even now. I could go on for hours, but the names mean little when the striving is long past, and those who bore such titles are long dead."

I persisted in my questioning of Elminster and was aided by the rapidly-diminishing stocks in my wine cellar. (Did you know he's got a spell that steals small samples of vintage out of still-sealed bottles, works a *neutralize poison* and a *detect magic* on them, and then conveys them either to a nearby plant or to his mouth without need for a goblet? It's eerie to watch small rippling clouds of fine wine hanging in the air above him, growing little spouts that probe for his mouth!) In this column and several hereafter, we'll explore the Border Kingdoms together.

Folk in the Dragonreach, the Moonsea North, and the Sword Coast North sometimes mistakenly refer to the proud city-states on the northern shores of the Lake of Steam as part of the Border Kingdoms, but the traveler is warned that making that mistake in speech in any of those cities—or in the real Border Kingdoms—is a good way to get your head swiftly parted from your body. The mages of Adaerglast, by the way, maintain their rule largely by means of a spell, perfected long ago, that can cause a man's head—or a limb, if they want to disable a weapon-wielding foe—to explode from a distance.

The cities of the coast lie on a warm, lush plain that gradually gives way to numerous small hills. These increase in elevation the closer they are to the grassy uplands of the Shaar. Four major forests (of mixed wood, though the largest and most famous stretch of trees is known as the Duskwood after the sort of trees that prevail there) divide up the narrow triangle of land that makes up the Border Kingdoms proper. Much of the land outside these forests is rich and fertile. It is overgrown with brush in areas untouched by plow.

Though smokeholes and volcanoes are common around the rest of the Lake of Steam, the only known volcanic activity in the Border Kingdoms is centered on the Mount, a wood-cloaked ridge in, of course, the Realm of the Mount. The volcanic activity consists of sulphurous fume holes that vent steaming vapor in the depths of the woods—steam that from time to time has made individual trees catch fire and burn to the ground, leaving neighboring trees untouched. This is the origin of the name "the Flaming Wood" found in old texts. Many warm caves and crevices on the Mount have sheltered brigands and monsters

over the decades, and the forest has seen much fighting and hasty burial of both corpses and treasure over the years.

The Border Kingdoms aren't all "kingdoms"—rather, they're many small principalities governed in a wide variety of ways, a confusing, ever-changing hodgepodge of tiny, unstable realms with names whose grandeur often outstrips the places they describe. This verdant, chaotically governed region is prime adventuring territory. In fact, many adventuring bands have decided to take over a border realm. Those who succeed spend the rest of their days defending it from other adventuring bands who've seized on the same idea. The Border Kingdoms are the birthplace of many a mercenary and merchant who hails from "a place you've never heard of."

It's been said that there are no accurate maps of the Border Kingoms, where boundaries, rulers, and the names of realms change from tenday to tenday and sometimes even from night to night. Border disputes seem to occupy the lives of many local folk on a more-or-less daily basis. Certainly Elminster could not find me one complete map—and he warned that relevant maps in the libraries of Candlekeep and elsewhere were likely to be sadly out of date at best and full of willful distortions at the worst. Some folk wanted to give the impression that the realm they represented—or wanted their local ruler's coins to go and trade with—was larger and more important than it really was. This sort of misinformation persists even today, particularly when Borderers travel the wider Realms in search of hireswords and adventurers to fight for them. So beware: On any map of the Border Kingdoms, boundaries are at best approximate, and between the making of the map and your journey, realms will probably have appeared, disappeared, or shifted locales somewhat.

The land of Thuntar, for example, is named for the self-styled "King of Adventurers," a giant of a man from the Tashalar who thought to find quiet retirement in the Border Kingdoms but was continually hounded by the one thing he couldn't fight: magic. Accordingly, the territory known as Thuntar has moved thrice. Once it was more or less where most maps place Talduth Vale now, then it moved to the coastal uplands of Ondeeme until the mage of that name transformed or drove out all inhabitants to found his own realm there. Finally it drifted to its present location on the western shore of the Kingdoms. Even there, it was once in the uplands, but lost territory there to a marauding hold of giants—land later seized by adventurers who slaughtered the giants and founded the land of High Emmerock. This sort of migration and continual skirmishing holds sway all the time in the lives of Borderers. The warm climate and fertile fields of the region make it possible for hotheaded inhabitants to do battle whenever the mood takes them and still have food enough to see them through the years ahead.

The adventurer Steeleye once called the Border Kingdoms "a deadly but enchanting place where ever-winding lanes take you to one after another dotty little realm complete with pompous rulers and customs, grinning and well-paid mercenaries, and crumbling castles here, there, and everywhere. The mercenaries are always dubbed something like "the Grand Guards" or the "Imperial High Host" and they tolerate the ruling dolts until the coins run out, then leave or take over the kingdom. Monsters roam, crops fall off their vines in such plenty that the feast tables groan, and magic goes wild, opening gates to perilous realms or inverting keeps as often as it does whatever was intended. It's hard to ride half a day in the Border Kingdoms without befriending or offending a Lord High Protector, a Grand Savant, or a High Puissant Duke—or all three."

The Border Kingdoms are often raided by nomads of the Shaar who are after food, fine weapons, and whatever else they can carry off. Their raids on caravans have given the Realm of the Ready Sword its name and forced the creation of alert and capable military forces in all of the Border realms south of the River Scelptar. The Borderers spend much of the rest of their time fighting each other or privately sponsored Calishite armies—or arming to do so in the very near future. This constant need to defend their home territory makes many Borderers reluctant to leave their lands—or at least the region. Consequently, most of the merchants that travel through the Border Kingdoms are enterprising folk from the Vilhon Reach who exchange both coins and trade goods (such as fine clothing, bolts of cloth, and all manner of smithywork) for the ever-abundant food of the region. Borderers tend to build stout and well-guarded granaries, gather food into these compounds, and wait for merchants to show up, buy the food, and carry it away. The edible output of the Border Kingdoms (like Turmish, across the Vilhon Reach to the northeast) has enabled the Vilhon to grow populous over the last century (in particular, over the last two generations). It's certain that many folk of the Vilhon (variously called "Vilhonese" or "Vilhonna," Elminster tells me) would starve if crops ever failed or were destroyed in the Border Kingdoms.

So, this little-known backwater of Faerûn is important to many folk besides adventurers. We'll discuss its most important places in columns to come. ❑

Next Month in the Newszine

- **The first in a series of maps of the LIVING CITY™**
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Races of Cerilia

The Humans of the BIRTHRIGHT™ Campaign Setting

by Rich Baker

In last month's issue, we took a quick look at the demihuman races of Cerilia, the setting for TSR's brand-new BIRTHRIGHT™ campaign. This month, we'll finish our sneak preview by examining Cerilia's most prolific and important race: humankind. There are five major human nationalities or cultures: the Anuireans, the Basarji, the Brechtür, the Rjurik, and the Vos. Each has its own language, traditions, strengths, weaknesses, and outlook on life.

We'll also conclude the intrigue surrounding the White Spear mercenaries, by describing some of the human characters of the drama. Feel free to incorporate these NPCs into your own BIRTHRIGHT campaign—an adventure set around the unmasking of the conspiracy could be a great way to start your Cerilian campaign!

Human Sub-Racial Ability Score Adjustments

Each human culture tends to value certain attributes above others, creating modest ability score adjustments for characters of that race. However, this is completely optional. If you feel that all humans should be identical in your campaign, with no differences definable in game terms, you are free to ignore these adjustments. There are no minimum or maximum scores a character must meet in order to select a human sub-race.

Anuirean:	+1 Wisdom, -1 Dexterity
Brecht:	+1 Dexterity, -1 Wisdom
Khinasi:	+1 Intelligence, -1 Constitution
Rjurik:	+1 Constitution, -1 Charisma
Vos:	+1 Strength, -1 Intelligence

Anuireans

The Anuireans are descended from the ancient tribe known as the Andu, who came to Cerilia more than two thousand years ago. The Andu settled in the green, rich southwestern quarter of Cerilia, clearing the great elven forests and establishing their kingdoms along the banks of the mighty Maesil river. They came to be known as Anuireans after the great battle of Deismaar and the founding of the Anuirean Empire. The ancient Andu were a fair-skinned, red-haired people, but over centuries of extensive contact with other cultures Anuireans have lost any defining physical characteristics.

The Anuirean Empire was the greatest and most powerful ever seen in Cerilia. It lasted almost a thousand years, and at its height included Brechtür, Rjurik, and most of Khinasi as tributary states. Unfortunately, the last emperor died heirless, and the empire dissolved into vicious succession struggles and civil wars. Today, five centuries after the empire's end, the Anuirean states are a balkanized patchwork of independent duchies, principalities, and baronies.

Anuirean society is semi-feudal, founded on a class of free farmers and craftsmen. Regents are usually titled nobles. Anuireans respect nobility, and look to their leaders to protect them from the barbarians and savages who surround the states of the old empire. Commoners strongly identify with "their" lords, and the dealings and alliances of the noble families is a topic of constant discussion throughout Anuirean lands.

Brechts

The Brechts followed the Andu to Cerilia, passing through the lands settled by that tribe to find their home along the bitter shores of the frozen Krakennauricht—the Kraken's Reach. Early in their history, the expansive Anuirean Empire subjugated the Brecht cities, and nearly three-quarters of Brechtür was under Anuirean rule for the duration of the empire. During this time, the Brecht nobility was greatly weakened by the presence of the Anuirean governors, so the Brechts came to value trade and wealth over feudal lords and allegiances. When the Anuirean Empire fell and the Brechtür gained independence, the guilds and merchants came into power.

Brechts tend to be short and stocky, with dark hair and eyes. Compared to the Anuireans, they're a more distant and less expressive people. The Brechtür city-states are mostly seafaring powers, and the Brechts are sailors, explorers, and traders of great renown. The greater part of their livelihood is based on fishing, whaling, sealing, and trade.

The Brechts believe in free enterprise, and Brecht society revolves around wealth. The nobility is weak in Brechtür, and several states have declared themselves republics. The Brechts have a fierce love of independence and a tradition of self-reliance; they don't wait for their lordlings or rulers to solve problems for them. Commerce and trade are expressions of this belief, and Brecht commoners owe their first loyalty to guilds and companies.

Khinasi

Unlike the other human cultures, who fled to Cerilia from the southern continent of Aduria, the ancestors of the Khinasi came to Cerilia from unknown lands across the Sea of Dragons, hundreds of years after the other human tribes. At that time they were known as the Basarji, and their language is still known by that name. The Basarji were greatly influenced by the ancient people known as the Masetians, and as the Masetians declined in influence, the Basarji rose to take their place.

The lands of the western Basarji, the Saere Siendere (the Golden Coast, in Anuirean), fell under Anuirean control at the height of the Empire's power. The tide of Anuirean expansion was turned by the remarkable hero el-Arrasi, the lord-protector of the ancient city of Ariya. El-Arrasi united the free Basarji states and defeated the Anuireans on several occasions, eventually winning concessions that freed the Basarji of the threat of Anuirean domination. After his death, the Basarji renamed themselves the khir-aften el-Arrasi, or the Khinasi.

Physically, the Khinasi are tall and lanky, with aquiline features and dark eyes. They range in complexion from a light coffee to a dark brown. Unlike the other human cultures, the Khinasi have

little fear of magic. The study of magic is considered the noblest of callings, and the universities of Khinasi are the finest in Cerilia. Like the Brechts, common Khinasi are traders and merchants, but a person's decorum, hospitality, and conduct are far more important than gross wealth.

Rjurik

While the Brechts struck inland towards the heart of Cerilia, the Rjurik migrated north to the taiga and highlands of Cerilia's northwestern corner. Like the people of Brechtür, the Rjurik jarldoms became satellites of the great Anuirean Empire, despite fierce resistance to Anuire's expansion. Anuirean control of this great wilderness was never very strong, however, and the Rjurik people came to live under their own laws. The fall of the Empire brought little actual change to the Rjuriks' lives.

The Rjurik are a tall, broad-shouldered people with blond or red hair and fair complexions. Both men and women wear their hair in long braids. They are stubborn individualists who don't swear fealty to anyone besides their own kin; the family is the most important part of Rjurik life. The Rjurik follow clan-leaders and jarls, but these rulers lead only by the clan's consent, and poor ones are often replaced. Most Rjurik are followers of the god Erik, a druidical power, and druids are revered throughout Rjurik society as teachers, leaders, and advisers.

The Rjurik nations are thinly settled, with large areas of virgin forest between communities. Most clans lead a semi-nomadic life, breaking up into small family groups for a summer season of hunting, gathering, and trapping, but returning to a common hall or steading to wait out the long, dark winter. The southernmost Rjurik states are more agrarian, and the influence of nearby Anuire has brought industry and trade to these lands.

Vos

The last of Cerilia's peoples are the Vos. They made the longest migration of the ancient tribes, settling the forbidding wilderness of Cerilia's northeastern lands. Their history is dark and tragic; after settling their new homeland, they were corrupted by the lies and promises of Azrai, the Face of Evil, and turned against the other peoples of Cerilia. At the great battle of Deismaar, the Vos fought on the side of evil, although they are no more or less evil than any other humans today.

The Vos are tall, thick-boned people with flat features, light eyes, and a sallow hue. Male warriors are fond of shaving their heads and wearing long, drooping mustaches. They have a rigid code of face and honor that demands blood for even unintentional insults. Most other humans consider the Vos to be crude, bloodthirsty barbarians, but the truth of the matter is simple: The Vos live in a violent, dangerous corner of Cerilia, and strength and fierceness are virtues to them. The trappings of civilization would only weaken them against their numerous enemies. By their own standards, Vos are acting with honor and courage when they raid and pillage those too weak to drive them off.

The leaders of Vosgaard are warchieftains known as tsarevos, advised by the priests of the grim Vos gods. Almost all Vos men are warriors and hunters—any other profession is considered unmanly. Vos women are greatly limited in their freedom by custom, although a few women have succeeded as warriors or tsarevas. The Vos tribes and clans are locked in a myriad knot of feud and counter-feud that ensures that a Vos warrior always has someone to hate.

The White Spears

In last month's issue, we introduced the remnants of the White Spear mercenary company, a stout dwarf named Tharkazik Durkummal and his companion, the elven scout Caelcormac Siebhellagh. In this issue, we'll continue to delve into the plots surrounding the company's hiring and betrayal by examining several human characters, who can also serve as examples of the races above.

Beval Doried, Count of Alendier
Male Anuirean, 7th-level Fighter, CE

Strength:	16
Dexterity:	11
Constitution:	15
Intelligence:	13
Wisdom:	9
Charisma:	13
Hit Points:	47
Armor Class:	0
THAC0:	14
No. of Attacks:	3/2
Damage:	by wpn

Notes: Specialized with bastard sword, +1 to attacks while mounted.

Bloodline: Anduiras, minor, 22

Blood Abilities: Courage (minor), battlewise (major)

Items: *Field plate mail +1,* shield, heavy warhorse, heavy lance, *bastard sword +1/+3 vs. reptiles,* dagger, *potion of healing*, leather scabbard, belt and weapon harness, excellent leather boots, brocade doublet embroidered with house arms, wool breeches and stockings.

Lord of the county of Alendier (a province in the Barony of Ghoere), Beval Doried is a short, stocky man of about forty, with spade-like hands and short-cropped hair. He views himself first and foremost as a warrior and battle-leader, and the study of the military arts is his favorite pastime—the library in his castle is filled with treatises on siegecraft, tactics, and the philosophy of warfare. Beval's interests and personality are regrettably not so well-developed in other areas, however, and his confrontational nature leads him into many struggles he could easily avoid. In his heart, Beval believes only in strength, power, and the right of the victor to claim the spoils.

As the count of Alendier, Beval is one of the vassals, or underlings, of Baron Gavin Tael of Ghoere. Alendier is one of Ghoere's most densely populated provinces, and it is the gateway from the Iron Barony to the Duchy of Mhoried; consequently, it is of vital strategic importance to both kingdoms. For many years, Beval has served his liege well, if with uncommon ruthlessness, and most of his peers and enemies view him as Ghoere's attack dog. The current watchful peace between the Barony of Ghoere and the Duchy of Mhoried has been especially difficult for the fierce knight, and he has grown increasingly contemptuous of Ghoere's ruler.

Beval's discontent seethed for years as he impatiently waited for a chance to display his military skills again. Finally, his court magician, the Khinasi sorceress Hamilah bint Deshara, helped him concoct a plan to bring Ghoere and Mhoried to battle again. Falsely representing himself as the Baron's agent, Beval secretly hired the White Spear mercenary company and sent them into Mhoried as marauders in order to incite trouble on the border.

Then he betrayed the men he had hired to Mhoried's Knights-Guardian.

Beval planned then to "discover" that the Baron of Ghoere had hired these bandits and use the incident as an excuse to switch allegiances, attacking his own liege lord after dragging Mhoried into the war. After the overthrow of the baron, Beval figured to seize Ghoere's throne and then turn on a weakened Mhoried, defeating their army and winning the ultimate victory he has sought for years.

However, Lord Doried's plan has not gone quite so well as he would have hoped. He meant for the White Spears to be decimated to a man, so that there would be no possibility of his involvement becoming public. The escape of several of the company's officers leaves Beval exposed, so he is taking steps to silence them forever. He has sent his chief bodyguard and henchmen, the Vos warrior Dmitri Shuvalov, to hunt down the survivors.

Dmitri Shuvalov
Male Vos, 4th-level Ranger, CG

Strength:	18 (57)
Dexterity:	15
Constitution:	16
Intelligence:	10
Wisdom:	14
Charisma:	8
Hit Points:	33
Armor Class:	5
THAC0:	16
No. of Attacks:	1 or 2
Damage:	by wpn

Items: *Studded leather armor +1*, battle axe of quality (+1 to attack rolls), *hand axe of hurling +2*, composite long bow, 12 sheaf arrows, lasso, homespun shirt and breeches, wolfskin cape, deerskin leggings and mocassins.

Ranger Abilities: Fight with two weapons, animal empathy, tracking, MS 13, HS 05 (w/ armor penalties).

Animal Companion: Feral wolfhound named Gart—MV 15; AC 6; HD 3; hp 16; #AT 1; Dmg d6+1; Int Animal; ML 15; XP 125.

Raised as a warrior of the Shuvalov clan of Molochev, Dmitri learned the ways of Vosgaard's cold forests at an early age. Like many of his race, he was a proficient hunter, trapper, and fighter while the children of more civilized folk were still playing with toys. Dmitri enjoyed a good life of hard but honest living among his family, until the day that the warriors of Dmitri's clan were slaughtered in a bitter battle against a raiding party from the Rodayev and Viershinsky clans. Dmitri fought alongside his cousins, but the glancing blow of a Rodayev warrior's mace stretched him out in the snow, unconscious. He was left for dead, and when he awoke, he found that the Shuvalov menfolk had fallen in battle, while the women and younger children

had been taken captive by their enemies.

Dmitri tracked the Rodayevs back to their village, and embarked on a war of silent stalkings throughout a long, cold winter. Creeping into the village, he shot lone warriors or hunters when the moon was dark, and on several occasions fired the Rodayevs' camp. Dmitri barely eluded several parties sent out to kill him. Finally, a Rodayev witch-woman was able to use her magic to learn their enemy's name and why he was stalking them, and the Rodayevs threatened to kill Dmitri's family if he didn't surrender himself. Dmitri chose to flee instead, leaving Vosgaard behind. To this day he doesn't know if the Rodayevs carried out their threats or allowed his family to live after he'd left.

Dmitri fell in with Count Doried while serving as a scout for the Ghoeran army during a campaign in the high fells of Markazor. The nobleman was impressed with the young man's wilderness skills and strength in battle, and convinced Dmitri to return to Alendier with him. The Vos has served loyally since, despite the fact that he comes and goes as he pleases.

Physically, Dmitri is a strapping fellow, nearly six and a half feet in height and broad of shoulder, with dark braided hair and small cicatrices, or scars, on his face. He is always accompanied by his faithful wolfhound, a fierce animal named Gart. Dmitri is currently on the trail of the surviving White Spears, and he is only a day behind Alder von Tanizen.

Hamilah bint Deshara
Female Khinasi, 6th-level Magician, NE

Strength:	12
Dexterity:	17
Constitution:	10
Intelligence:	18
Wisdom:	14
Charisma:	14
Hit Points:	16
Armor Class:	5
THAC0:	19
No. of Attacks:	1 or 3
Damage:	by wpn

Items: Fine silk robes and veil, *dagger of venom +1*, *wand of frost* with eight charges, *cloak of the bat*, six darts, vial of type B poison for darts, small belt pouch for spell components, *potion of levitation*, *potion of gaseous form*.

Spells Memorized: 1) *change self, charm person, color spray, phantasmal force, spider climb;* 2) *alter self, forget, improved phantasmal force, invisibility, misdirection;* 3) *suggestion, wraithform.*

Hamilah is a voluptuous beauty with an air of mystery and enchantment around her. Her manner is flirtatious and coy, and she constantly tests the men she meets, trying to bewitch them with nothing more than the sultry sound of her voice and the skill of her subtle charms. From time to time, her true colors show when she is denied something she wants or is embarrassed in some way—people who laugh at her never do so twice, and in some cases her vengeance has proved to be quite lethal.

Hamilah was born and raised in the Khinasi sultanate of Djafra, the child of a well-off merchant who dreamed of winning his daughter a place in the nobility with a lucky marriaige. Hamilah schooled herself in the arts of seduction, but she found her one true love in the study of magic, which she first began to learn simply because it was fashionable among Djafra's nobility at the time. Soon Hamilah had placed thoughts of marriage and courtship far behind her—what was the power of seduction, compared to the real power of magic?

Unfortunately, Hamilah's ambitions got the better of her, and after an incident in which she used her wiles to learn the secrets of a much more powerful wizard, she hastily departed on a quest for knowledge and power. She has left mayhem and confusion in her path for almost ten years, giving little thought to those she hurts in her climb to glory. Hamilah attached herself to Count Doried's court two years ago to lay low after a regrettable murder or two in the city of Anuire. She hopes to lure Doried into destruction, and plans to steal his bloodline in order to gain the ability to work true magic. Encouraging Doried to turn on his master and incite a war with Mhoried is only the first step in her plans for the battle-hungry knight.

Alder von Tanizen, Commander of the White Spear Company
Male Brecht, 9th-level Fighter, N

Strength:	17
Dexterity:	15
Constitution:	12
Intelligence:	14
Wisdom:	13
Charisma:	14
Hit Points:	52
Armor Class:	2
THAC0:	12
No. of Attacks:	3/2
Damage:	by wpn

Items: *Three-quarter plate mail +1, bastard sword +2,* horseman's mace, dagger, quilted aketon (padded undercoat), breeches, soft leather boots, riding horse, *potion of invisibility*

Notes: Excellent rider, skilled in fighting from horseback

A tall, athletic man with wide shoulders and long, well-muscled limbs, Alder has made his living as a professional soldier for more than 20 years. He was born in the Brecht nation of Kiergard, a land occupied by the black armies of the Gorgon, and learned to be a hard and unforgiving man while he was still a boy. Alder spent his early teens fighting the Gorgon's troops as part of Kiergard's resistance, but betrayals and ill fortune spelled the end of many of his friends, and by the time he was 17, he fled from Kiergard as a homeless outlaw.

Alder fell in with various mercenary companies, honing his skills as a warrior and a leader over the course of dozens of campaigns from one end of Cerilia to the other. While serving as the Banner Captain (second-in-command) of Athelmund Redbeard's band, Alder stumbled onto a hidden cache of ancient elven gold, and used this windfall to organize his own company: the White Spear Company. The White Spears operated across Brechtür and Anuire for more than ten years before meeting their end at Saered Crossing.

Alder survived the massacre, but only by abandoning the last survivors of the company and using his *potion of invisibility* to slip through the enemy lines. Tharkazik, Caelcormac, and he are the only living souls who can reveal Count Doried's part in the White Spear incident, and Alder is already well on his way to making himself scarce. With a stolen horse and a saddlebag full of gold, the mercenary captain is already halfway to the Free City of Endier, where he hopes to build another company of soldiers for hire. ❑

The Age of Legend

Introducing the *Threads of Legend* Setting

by Drew Caldwell

After centuries of hiding underground, the races of the world are coming out into the sunlight. Heroes are rising up to reclaim the world for themselves and others—the Age of Legend has begun. Trolls, dwarfs, elves, orks, and humans live side by side with exotic races: the lizard-like t'skrang, the small, winged windlings, and the people of living rock known as obsidimen. Magical and ordinary creatures have returned to the forests and jungles. Magic hangs in the air; everywhere, arcane energies offer power to those willing to learn the magic's ways.

Long ago, the land of Barsaive grew lush and green. Thriving forests sheltered plants and animals, and people lived well on the land's bounty. Then the world's flow of magic rose, and at its height terrible creatures came to this world from the depths of astral space. These Horrors drowned the earth in darkness, leaving suffering and destruction in their wake. They laid the world waste over the long years that people call the Scourge. The forests died. Towns vanished. Fertile grasslands and majestic mountains became blasted badlands, home only to the Horrors' twisted mockery of life.

The Horrors lusted to destroy all living things, but they did not succeed. The magicians of the Theran Empire learned of their coming and warned the world, and the people of the Earth took shelter underground. They built fantastic underground cities called kaers and citadels; generations of their children were born, grew up, and died within these earthen enclaves without ever seeing the sun. For 400 years the Horrors roamed the land, devouring all they touched while the frightened people hid. Then the world's magic ebbed, forcing these abominations to retreat to the astral Hell of their origin. But because the Horrors departed before the magicians and wise men had believed they would, the people remained wary. They emerged slowly from their kaers, facing the world half in hope that the Scourge had truly ended and half in fear that the Horrors lingered. Many Horrors remain in this world, inflicting agonies on other living creatures. As the peoples of the Earth struggle to rebuild their shattered world, they must combat the Horrors who seek to prolong their reign of destruction and despair.

Heroes travel across the land, exploring unknown places and rediscovering lost legends. The Scourge has changed the world almost beyond recognition. Many people died during the world's long night; the Horrors breached some kaers and citadels and destroyed their inhabitants. Other kaers remain sealed, some because unknowable disaster befell them and some from simple fear; the contents of these places await discovery by bold explorers.

The dwarf kingdom of Throal lies at the center of the province of Barsaive, the largest inhabited province in the known world. The dwarfs seek to unite Barsaive's farflung cities and people under Throal's crown and banner, so that Barsaive will be strong enough to repel the advances of the Theran Empire that ruled the land before the Scourge. The Therans returned to the province shortly after the Scourge ended, seeking to bend it again to their yoke, but Barsaive's people rallied behind the dwarfs of Throal. Though temporarily beaten, the Therans gather their strength and wait to strike again. As Barsaive's heroes search for lost treasures and battle fantastic creatures, they must also fight the Therans, who plot to rob the province and its people of their newfound freedom.

In the Age of Legend, heroes band together to fight the Horrors and reclaim the wounded world. As they explore the altered land, searching for legendary cities and treasures, they become the legends that will light the coming days; tales of their deeds will live forever in men's hearts. From many paths, the heroes come to join in common cause. These seekers of honor and glory come from many Disciplines, and fight to redeem the world with a multitude of gifts. A band of heroes may include an Illusionist, a spellcaster who combines deception and reality to confuse those around him; a Swordmaster, trained in the art of fighting with blades; a Beastmaster, able to command the beasts of the earth and air; or any number of otherwise gifted folk. No matter whence they come, all the world's heroes share one trait; a willingness to fight to reclaim the world from all that threatens it. Through noble deeds and sacrifice, the heroes of the world will forge its future. ❑

Threads of Legend

The New Living Setting for *Earthdawn*

by Drew Caldwell

Welcome to Threads of Legend, an ongoing series of *Earthdawn* tournaments. Threads of Legend lets you create your own character, build your legend, and meet other *Earthdawn* players in a fun (but far from relaxed!) setting.

This article provides all the information necessary to play in Threads of Legend tournaments. Some of the rules described in these pages differ from those published in FASA Corporation's *Earthdawn* products; all such changes have been made in order to capture the flavor and atmosphere of *Earthdawn* within the structure of a series of ongoing tournaments. As FASA publishes new and different rules, the rules for Threads of Legend may also change. Players will be notified of all such changes.

Character Creation

Players are encouraged to create their own characters and play them in Threads of Legend tournaments at different conventions. When creating tournament characters, players may use all the Disciplines in the *Earthdawn* rulebook and the *Earthdawn Companion*. For now, Disciplines described in other *Earthdawn* products may not be used in Threads of Legend tournaments.

Player Guidelines
Threads of Legend players should use the purchase point method of character creation (pgs. 44-61, *Earthdawn* rulebook). A character record sheet (see pgs. 329–330 of the rulebook) should be completed for each character. Threads of Legend characters must have primary and secondary personality characteristics (pgs. 58-59, *Earthdawn* rulebook).

All mundane equipment is available to starting characters, though most characters will not be able to afford some of the equipment they might like. Carrying capacity restrictions will be enforced, and so new characters should take care to purchase only the equipment they really need.

Magical equipment may be purchased only during tournament play. If you want to begin play with a healing potion, blood charm, or other magical item, set aside some silver from your starting pool of money. At some point during your first adventure, you may have a chance to pick up the item in which you are interested.

Using Archetypes
Photocopies of each Discipline's archetypes (pgs. 67-91, *Earthdawn* rulebook) are available from tournament judges for players who lack the time or inclination to create their own character. Prior to tournament play, players must modify the archetype they choose as follows:

- Each player must give his or her character a unique name.

- Each player must choose a primary and secondary personality characteristic for role-playing.

- Magic items listed for the archetype should be crossed out and, if possible, replaced with a non-magical counterpart. For example, a ferndask shield might be replaced with a mundane shield. A healing potion has no mundane counterpart, so the player cannot replace it with anything.

Creating Multiple Characters
A single player may create and use multiple characters in Threads of Legend tournaments, subject to the following restrictions. First, a player may only play one character in any given tournament; second, characters played by the same player cannot trade or give each other money, equipment, magic items, spell books, and so on (see Trading Between Characters).

Short Story Bonus
Players who submit a short story describing their character's background (see Character History, pgs. 60-61, *Earthdawn* rulebook) and written from their character's perspective to the Great Library of Throal will receive a Legend Point bonus. For instructions on how to obtain the bonus Legend Point certificate, see About the Great Library at the end of the section on magic.

Character Creation Seminars
Convention organizers may offer a brief *Earthdawn* orientation seminar prior to Threads of Legend events. These workshops will deal with the *Earthdawn* universe in order to help you develop roleplaying material for your character, as well as explaining the mechanics of combat, magic use, spellcasting and character creation. If you have never-played *Earthdawn,* you might want to attend one of these seminars, though attendance is not necessary to play.

Equipment
All non-magical equipment listed in the *Earthdawn* rulebook (pgs. 248-267) can be purchased freely between adventures for the listed price. Because Threads of Legend is a series of tournaments run by different judges rather than a campaign setting, the rules for obtaining magical equipment are a little different (see below). Whenever possible, characters are encouraged to buy equipment and do the related book-keeping between adventures.

Usually, your character will have access to stores and shops at some point during the tournament adventures. If your character really needs something, take advantage of every opportunity to get it. However, players should use common sense and an honor system when buying equipment—for example, keep in mind that most shopkeepers do not keep large quantities of esoteric equipment in stock all the time. Be judicious in your purchases.

Non-unique Magical Items
This category covers blood charms, healing potions, light crystals, and so on.

As stated earlier, magical equipment is only available during tournament play. When your character purchases a magical item (other than a unique magical treasure), the judge will give you a magic item certificate in exchange for the silver pieces your character has paid. Keep the certificate with your character sheet. Supplies of these items will often be limited—first come, first served (unless you are a persuasive enough role-player to talk the shopkeeper around).

Magic

Astral Viewing
Windlings and spellcasters using astral sight may ask other player characters to describe their astral patterns before forming adventuring groups. For tournament purposes, the way in which the assensing character stares at another player character will automatically be noticed by the target of the astral sight.

Astrally-sensing characters should make an Astral Sensing Test versus the Spell Defense of the target character. If the test is successful, the player of the target character should respond with a description of his astral pattern. This pattern should reflect aspects of the character's primary and secondary personality characteristics.

A second successful test reveals a clue about the primary Discipline of the character being studied. For example, a deeper study of a beastmaster's pattern might reveal that her "hands" are actually animal claws, suggesting a connection with the beastmaster Discipline. A third successful Astral Sensing Test will reveal the approximate Circle of the character being studied. Relatively simple patterns indicate Circles 1 through 3; patterns of middling complexity indicate Circles 4 through 8; highly complex patterns indicate Circles 9 and up.

If an Astral Sensing Test is unsuccessful, the astrally sensitive character must wait 30 minutes of real time before making another attempt. A minimum roll indicates strain per the normal *Earthdawn* rules.

All player characters are encouraged to think about the appearance of their astral patterns before the tournament starts, so that they can respond appropriately if assensed by an astrally sensitive player character or NPC.

Trading Between Characters
Characters played by different players may trade mundane or magical equipment, spells, or other items with each other. When all parties are satisfied with the deal, the player of each character receiving an item prepares a Character Trading Form to be signed by each character giving up an item. If the trade involves magical gear or is valued at more than 5,000 silver pieces, the deal is not considered valid until a copy of each trading form is received by the Great Library.

A character who trades a spell to your character can be considered your character's teacher for purposes of figuring out the modifier for the test to learn the new spell (see p. 151, *Earthdawn* rulebook). Note the teaching character's Thread Weaving Talent rank on the Character Trading Form when you receive the new spell for your grimoire. Unless the other character dies during the tournament, your character can assume that the other character took the time to attempt to teach the new spell at the appropriate pace between tournaments. If the other character dies, your character may still attempt to learn the new spell, but without the modifier for having an instructor. The honor system applies to all tests for learning new spells between tournaments. If the test to learn a new spell is failed, your character may try again when he or she reaches the next Circle in your character's chosen Discipline.

Becoming A Questor
If you want your character to become a questor of a particular Passion, follow the rules in the *Earthdawn Companion.* Your character must also complete a deed worth questor Devotion Points during a Threads of Legend tournament, and you must write a short story in which the Passion of your choice appears to your character. Send the deed completion certificate and the short story to the Great Library, and you will receive a Questor Certificate in the mail.

As you begin each subsequent Threads of Legend tournament, let your judge know that your character is a questor of a particular Passion. Every effort will be made to allow you to earn Devotion Points during tournaments. The Devotion Point bonus (or penalty) you earn will be noted as completed deeds on the Adventure Participation Form you receive after each tournament.

Creating Items
Characters may also create non-unique magical items under the following conditions:

• The character has the artisan skill needed to make a high-quality, non-magical version of the item. The character must possess the skill at Rank 5 or better, and is more likely to succeed as the artisan skill rank increases.

• The character has a knowledge skill related to the item he or she intends to create (herbalism for a ferndask shield, magical potions for a healing potion, etc.). As with the artisan skill, the character must possess the knowledge skill at Rank 5 or better, and is more likely to succeed as the knowledge skill rank increases.

• The character must know how to create the specific magic item. Characters may discover how the item was created by purchasing the item's creation formula from the well-known wizard Logos Serespar, researching the item, trading with another character for the item formula, or discovering the formula as part of a treasure.

Purchasing Formulas from Logos Serespar
Logos Serespar is attached to the Great Library of Throal, and all requests to purchase an item formula from him must be submitted to the Great Library. Instructions for sending requests to the wizard appear in About the Great Library. The cost for such a purchase is double the listed price for the item in silver; the Legend Point cost is equal to five times the listed purchase price.

Researching Item Formulas
A character must have at least one talent and two knowledge skills of Rank 5 or higher that are somehow related to the item in question in order to research its creation. Specific skills needed will vary. Players who want their characters to conduct research must write a letter to the Great Library, from the character's point of view, explaining why that character's specific high-rank talents and skills would allow him or her to research the creation of a specific magic item. If approved, an approximate cost (in terms of time, money, Legend Points, and deeds) will be included with the approval letter. Once the character has paid those costs and sent in all necessary documents—deed completion certificates (if necessary) and a short story describing the character's creation of the magic item—the player will receive a magic item certificate and a Legend Point Bonus certificate in the mail.

Trading Item Formulas
If another character has obtained a magic item's creation formula, your character may trade with him or her for it. The price for such a trade must be determined by the two players involved, and a Character Trading Form must be submitted to the Great Library of Throal.

Discovering Formulas as Treasure
If a character obtains a magic item formula as part of magical treasure that he or she finds in a tournament, the judge will provide a certificate for the item formula.

Unique Magical Items
A number of unique magic items requiring thread weaving will be included in each tournament. Characters who finish an adventure with such a magic item in their possession will receive a magic item certificate from the judge that includes a description of the item and a code number.

Purchasing Key Knowledge
Like creation formulas for non-unique magical items, pattern key knowledge may be purchased from Logos Serespar at the Great Library of Throal. Such a purchase costs Legend Points equal to

half the amount required to purchase a Thread Weaving Talent of the same rank as the rank of the key knowledge. In addition, the character must pay the wizard twice the base Legend Point cost in silver for his time and effort.

When requesting key knowledge, include the description and code number for your magic item in the request and send it to the Great Library. You will receive a copy of the item's pattern key knowledge and a short story written about the item by the tournament author, along with a technical description of its magical abilities for the level of key knowledge you have purchased.

Researching Key Knowledge

If a player character researches a magical treasure, that character receives bonus Legend Points for his or her work. Several different rules may apply to research, depending on the circumstances under which it takes place.

Weaponsmiths with the Weapon History Talent may analyze magical weapons for key knowledge; troubadours with the Item History Talent may research other magical treasures. For tournament purposes, assume that tests made to use these talents have "maxed out;" for example, a troubadour with the Item History Talent at Rank 2 can obtain the Rank 1 and Rank 2 key knowledges for the magical item in question. Players whose characters follow these Disciplines may obtain pattern knowledge for their characters by writing a short story from the character's perspective that explains how the character obtained the magical treasure. Include a detailed description of the treasure, and indicate its code number and your character's talent rank on your manuscript. After you have submitted the short story to the Great Library of Throal, it will be returned to you along with a detailed technical description of its magical abilities for the level of key knowledge you have purchased.

As players build their characters' legends and improve their talent ranks, they may send brief letters to Logos indicating that they are researching additional key knowledges. At least one short story describing the character's participation in a Threads of Legend tournament must be on file with the Great Library between each request for additional key knowledge.

If your character researches a magical treasure for another character, complete and sign a Character Trading Form indicating the talent rank your character is using on the other character's behalf and the compensation your character received (if any). The player of the other character should submit a copy of this form to the Great Library in place of the fee that would normally be paid to Logos. You will receive the magical treasure's short story and technical description in the mail, and your character may edit or withhold information from the client character as you choose. Be careful how you handle this, however—if the other player's character is a powerful troll warrior or vengeful wizard, keeping too much back may not be a good idea!

If your character has astral sight, a knowledge skill related to the magical treasure to be analyzed, and access to a large library, he or she may investigate a magical treasure without possessing the Weapon History or Item History talents. The maximum rank of key knowledge that a character can obtain this way is equal to one-half the character's Astral Sight Talent rank or related knowledge skill rank, whichever is lower (rounded down). The cost in silver for access to a library (at Throal or elsewhere) is 100 silver per key knowledge rank desired. For example, a character with a Rank 4 Astral Sight Talent and

the knowledge skill Alchemy and Potions at Rank 3 can research the Rank 1 key knowledge of a magical glass beaker found during an adventure at a cost of 100 silver pieces. If this character increases his or her Alchemy and Potions knowledge skill to Rank 4, he or she may research the treasure's Rank 2 key knowledge for an additional 200 silver pieces. Once again, send in a request for the results of your research to the Great Library of Throal.

Trapped and Cursed Items

As part of his research services, Logos Serespar detects and disarms traps or curses on magic items. If your character chooses to study a trapped or cursed item, the average of your character's ranks in the applicable talents or knowledge skills will be compared to the difficulty numbers for detecting and avoiding traps or curses. If your character fails to find and avoid a trap or curse, he or she must participate in at least one Threads of Legend tournament under the burden of the curse or the damage done by the trap before the related Wounds, Horror marks, or other effects can be healed or lifted (see Healing, below). For example, a troubadour might have to endure an entire tournament suffering from two Wounds and the related step penalty, or a weaponsmith might be forced to use a shield that reflects damaging magic spells at other members of his party. The magical threads tying a character to a cursed magic item can be seen using astral sight, and so players are advised to have their characters carefully examine prospective party members astrally before allowing them to join the adventuring group. After suffering through the requisite tournament, Horror marks and curses can be lifted from magic items in the same fashion as from characters (see Healing).

Creating New Magic Items

Characters may create new magic items for use in Threads of Legend tournaments. All characters may use blood magic to create these items—weaponsmiths and spellcasters have additional methods at their disposal.

A unique magic item created by a Threads of Legend character becomes a pattern item for that character, and items created through teamwork are pattern items for each member of the team. Therefore, characters who create magic items should grant access to them wisely.

Also, remember that creating new magic items is a risky process. Your new item may have abilities different from the ones you intended, and if you failed a skill roll at a crucial point, your new item may contain curses or Horror marks within its pattern. As with other magic items, curses and Horror marks can be removed by completing deeds during Threads of Legend tournaments. Specific deeds necessary to "clean up" a magic item you create will be included in the materials you receive about the item from the Great Library of Throal.

Using Blood Magic

The player of any character who dies during a Threads of Legend tournament may write a short story about their character's last adventure. As part of the death scene, the character may curse his or her slayer and imbue a piece of his or her equipment with the magical energy of the character's life force. If the character died during a Threads of Legend tournament in which other members of the party survived, the player may bequeath the magic item so created to the surviving character of his choice. If no party members survived, the magic item will appear in a future Threads of Legend tournament as a choice piece of loot. The more powerful the character who dies, the more powerful the resulting magic item will be. Specific abilities are at the discretion of the Great Library, and will be determined in accordance with the Tournament Writer Guidelines for creating magical treasures. Bloodlegacy treasures of this type require a deed to activate the magic item's potential—either fulfilling the slain character's last mission or bringing his or her killers to justice.

If the slain character is later resurrected through the Ritual of the Ghost Master (see Building Your Legend, below), and the character obtains the blood magic item and fulfills the deed, the player of the resurrrected character must submit a short story about those events. The resurrected character will then receive a substantial Legend Point bonus. Each troubadour on record with the Great Library will be sent a copy of the short story and the character's Legendary Status (see p. 226, *Earthdawn* rulebook) increases by one level. A character can only increase his or her Legendary Status once in this way.

Weaponsmiths and Spellcasters

Weaponsmiths and spellcasters may create unique magical treasures using rules similar to those for creating non-unique magical items. Weaponsmiths may create unique magical weapons and armor; spellcasters may create any unique magic item except weapons and armor.

A weaponsmith or spellcaster must first be able to craft the non-unique version of the desired item before he or she can place unique enchantments within it. Each unique enchantment requires a different mix of talents, skills and deeds. The specific mix should be

suggested by the creating player, and sent in to the Great Library along with a short story describing how the character will create the magical treasure. Logos Serespar will write back, suggesting modifications and estimating a cost in Legend Points, silver and deeds. Once you have accumulated the necessary deed certificates, send them to the Great Library; you will receive a magic item certificate in the mail along with a substantial Legend Point bonus.

Team Efforts

Characters who have adventured together in at least one Threads of Legend tournament may cooperate to create new magic items. At least one of the characters must have created a new item on his or her own already, before cooperatively creating a new item. The team leader is responsible for sending all necessary information to the Great Library of Throal, including a Character Trading Form signed by each participant. The range of items that can be created and the abilities they may be given is significantly broader when characters of different Disciplines work together.

Using Magic Items

Standard rules for using magic items apply in Threads of Legend tournaments. Your character must have a Thread Weaving Talent of sufficient rank to weave a thread to the item; your character must pay the Legend Point cost associated with the thread to be woven; and any deeds needed to activate the item's magical potential must be completed during the course of a single Threads of Legend tournament. Once your character has fulfilled the deed requirements for your magic item, a deed completion certificate will be signed by the tournament judge.

Using Spells from Grimoires

This section describes how to incorporate new spells from purchased, shared, found or stolen grimoires into your character's spell repertoire.

Characters may purchase any spell included in the standard *Earthdawn* rules from Logos Serespar at the Great Library. The cost in Legend Points is equal to half the cost of purchasing a talent of the same rank as the circle of the spell. The character must also pay the wizard twice the base cost in silver for his time and effort. A Second Circle elementalism spell, for example, costs 100 Legend Points plus 400 silver pieces.

If a player character has the Read and Write Magic Talent, the Spellcasting Talent, and the appropriate Thread Weaving Talent, that character may transfer spells into his or her personal grimoire. The highest spell circle that the character can transfer is equal to the character's lowest rank in those three talents. For example, if a character has Rank 2 Read and Write Magic, Rank 4 Spellcasting , and Rank 3 Thread Weaving (Elementalism), that character may only transfer Elementalist spells of First or Second Circle. The character must learn transferred spells as discussed under Trading Spells, below. The character may cast spells from a grimoire other than his own using the Casting From a Grimoire rules (p. 154 - 155, *Earthdawn* rulebook).

Designing New Spells

Characters of Fifth Circle or higher with the Spellcasting and Thread Weaving talents and the knowledge skill Magical Theory (any spellcasting Discipline) may design new spells for use in Threads of Legend tournaments. The character must possess each of these talents and skills at two or more ranks higher than the proposed circle of the new spell. For example, to design a new spell equivalent to other Second Circle nethermancer spells, a character must have Rank 4 or higher in the Spellcasting Talent, Thread Weaving (Nethermancy) Talent, and Magical Theory (Nethermancy) Skill.

New spells should be written up in the same format as current *Earthdawn* spells and sent to the Great Library for approval. If the spell is approved, you will receive a New Spell certificate in the mail and your character will receive a Legend Point bonus. Your character's name must be incorporated into the name of the new spell, and the new spell becomes part of your character's key pattern knowledge. This means that other characters who learn the spell will automatically have a key knowledge about your character for spellcasting and blood magic purposes,

and so characters should take care in sharing their new spells with others.

About The Great Library
The Great Library of Throal serves as a repository of information on Threads of Legend tournaments, characters, magic items, and the ongoing story line that runs through the adventures. Your creative work as a player-writer is your own. It will not be published, sold, or used in any way without your express written permission.

Unless you specifically ask not to be included, your name and address will appear on the list of local players available to conventions that sponsor Threads of Legend tournaments. In other words, you can expect to receive a flyer when a convention in your area is running a Threads of Legend tournament. If you think of this kind of flyer as "junk mail" and don't want one, send in a note and your name will not be listed.

Between Adventures

Horror Marks and Curses
At the end of each tournament session, the judge will hand out Horror Mark and/or Curse certificates as necessary. These certificates indicate the name of the Horror and/or the effect of the curse. Horror marks and curses will also be registered with the Great Library of Throal.

If your character picks up a Horror mark or a curse, don't despair. The drawbacks usually outweigh the positives, but nonetheless a Horror mark or Curse can have its advantages. To get rid of a curse or Horror mark, see Healing, below.

Healing
All characters are assumed to heal between adventures. Your character begins each tournament session in good health (zero Current Damage, no Wounds).

To remove Horror marks and curses, the player of an afflicted character must write a short story explaining how the character got rid of the thing. When writing your story, you may assume that your character received assistance from sympathetic NPCs. Depending on the decision of the tournament author, removing particularly nasty curses may require a deed in addition to a short story. If your character lands in this situation, the response to your short story will include a modified ending, giving you the clues your character needs to complete the required deed.

In addition to removing the Horror mark or curse from your character, your story is worth bonus Legend Points. The bonus amount will be indicated on the certificate you receive showing that your Horror mark or curse has been removed.

Living Expenses between Adventures

Your character may spend silver to stay clean and well-fed between adventures as you choose. Spending (or not spending) money on living expenses between adventurers has the following effects:

New characters are considered comfortable for the first adventure at no charge. Reaction step adjustments may be overriden by a tournament judge; some NPCs resent wealth or empathize with the poor, and so the judge may make changes accordingly.

Characters unable to pay the 5 silver pieces needed to maintain a squalid lifestyle, or who remain in a squalid lifestyle for three consecutive tournaments, are considered captured by Theran slavers and removed from play. The honor system applies to declaring a down-on-his-luck character a Theran slave. Such a character may be "rescued" by another Threads of Legend player if that player writes a short story in which his or her character rescues the enslaved character from the Therans. This story, like all others, is worth bonus Legend Points to the writer and should be submitted to the Great Library.

Tournament Notes

Tournament winners receive extra Legend Points for their Threads of Legend characters. Prizes such as *Earthdawn* merchandise, RPGA® Network gift certificates, or other goodies may also be awarded. Prize availability will be disclosed when you register for the event. The decisions of the tournament coordinators are final.

Your character's name, your real name and your address must be clearly written on the Threads of Legend Adventure Participation Form included in the voting packet. The Legend Point certificate for your participation in a Threads of Legend tournament will be mailed to the name and address on the form.

Comments on Tournament Play

- Tournament play is a juggling act. The point is to balance roleplaying and "rules-playing", and to have fun doing it.
- Don't feel that you have to complete the adventure in order to "succeed." Roleplay and enjoy yourselves!
- Many of the really nifty encounters, loot and bonus Legend Points are only available to groups that successfully clear the initial, usually easier hurdles of tournament play. If you want the heavy rewards, you need to work up to the heavy challenges. Sometimes the most difficult challenges entail earning the trust and cooperation of an NPC, rather than beating a monster to death with a sword.
- Don't get in over your head. A dead character is a depressing sight. If you feel that your group has reached their "toughness tolerance," back off. Your characters will not necessarily be able to accomplish every challenge that faces them—learn your limits.
- When you meet other adventurers, choose your fellow group members with an eye toward how you want to play. Threads of Legend tournaments should be equally fun for a traveling band of troubadours and a mixed company of warriors and wizards, though each group would play their tournament differently.

Lifestyle	Cost	Effect
Squalid	5 sp	-2 steps on Reaction Tests until you bathe and eat a hot meal.
Poor	25 sp	-1 step on Reaction Tests until you bathe and eat a hot meal.
Comfortable	150 sp/Circle	None
Wealthy	350 sp/Circle	+2 steps on reaction rolls for the first 24 hours of the adventure

Building your Legend

You can use Legend Points to improve your character as described in the *Earthdawn* rulebook (pgs. 218-227). When your character is ready to advance to the next Circle, he or she can hire trainers for the costs listed on pgs. 222-225 of the *Earthdawn* rulebook. Send the silver and a request for training to Logos Serespar to register your character's new Circle with the Great Library of Throal. Alternatively, you may take the Training Pledge described below or advance in Circles by learning from a Ghost Master. Whatever method you choose, you will receive a Circle Advancement certificate in the mail. Keep the certificate with your character sheet.

If you want to build your legend a little faster, write a short story from your character's perspective that describes your experience during each Threads of Legend tournament and send it to the Great Library. Once your story is on record at the Great Library, a bonus Legend Point certificate will be sent to you. These bonus certificates can be obtained each time you participate in a Threads of Legend tournament.

The Training Pledge

Your character may only take the Training Pledge (p. 223-225, *Earthdawn* rulebook) with another player character of a higher Circle. The trainer must purchase or find a magical orichalcum piece during a Threads of Legend tournament.

The player of the trainee character must write a short story describing the scene in which the trainer character takes the trainee's oath. The player of the trainer signs the short story next to the signature of the player of the trainee before the story is sent to the Great Library. A Character Trading Form (see Trading Between Characters, above) must be completed for the transfer of the magical orichalcum piece, and the magic item certificate must be signed over to the player of the trainee character.

Thereafter, for as long as the trainee character is the custodian of the orichalcum piece, a bonus Legend Point certificate will be sent to the trainer character each time the trainee advances to a higher Circle in his or her Discipline. If the trainee loses the orichalcum piece during a Threads of Legend tournament and does not regain the coin before the time slot expires, the coin is considered permanently lost and the trainee's Circle

advancement from the time of taking the Training Pledge is also lost.

The loss of the coin has no effect on the trainer character. However, if the player of the trainer writes a short story explaining how his or her character recovered the coin for the trainee, the trainer character will receive a bonus Legend Point certificate and the trainee will regain all Circles lost. Compensation of the trainer by the trainee character is left to the discretion of the trainee's player.

Ghost Master Ritual

The Ghost Master Ritual (pgs. 225-226, *Earthdawn* rulebook) is a modified nethermatic ritual available as a talent at Fifth Circle. Any character of the Fifth Circle or higher can learn this ritual. Each Discipline has its own variant, and a character may learn the ritual from another character of the same Discipline (via a Character Trading Form) or by requesting instructions from Logos Serespar at the Great Library. Obtaining the Ghost Master Ritual from Logos costs Legend Points equal to half the amount neccessary to purchase the talent. In addition, the purchaser must pay the wizard twice the base Legend Point cost in silver for his time and effort.

Player characters may only use the deceased characters of other players for Ghost Masters. Threads of Legend characters who die before achieving Sixth Circle cannot be resurrected as Ghost Masters. If you are the player of a dead high-Circle character, other players must obtain permission from one of your currently living characters to use the name of your dead character in their Ghost Master Ritual. Compensation to your current character should be reasonable, but is left to the players to negotiate. Once agreement is reached, you must complete a Character Trading Form giving the other player access to your dead character's name for the ritual. Write down your dead character's spell defense on the form for the other player's reference.

Upon request, the Great Library of Throal will provide the real names and addresses of players with possible Ghost Master candidates for your character. In your request for suitable candidates, include your character's name, Discipline, and current Circle. An orichalcum coin free of enchantment is needed for the ritual, as is the Training Pledge. The rules given under The Training Pledge above apply to this pledge coin. A Ghost Master may recover an orichalcum coin in the same way as a living trainer.

Each time the trainee character uses the Ghost Master Ritual to advance a Circle, the trainee's player must write a short story; the trainer's player must sign the manuscript before it is submitted to the Great Library.

Bringing a Ghost Master to Life

If a trainee character still has the pledge coin when he or she attains a Circle higher than the Ghost Master's Circle, the trainee's player may submit a short story in which the Ghost Master returns to life. The trainee character will receive a bonus Legend Point certificate for this deed. Compensation by the resurrected Ghost Master is up to the player of the resurrected character. The newly resurrected character returns to the world stark naked, but receives a bonus Knowledge/Philosophy skill at Rank 10.

Submitting Paperwork

Short stories, requests for Circle advancement, requests for research, etc. may be sent to the Great Library of Throal at the following address:

Logos Serespar
(a.k.a. Mr. Drew Caldwell)
218 N Ellis Avenue
Wheaton, IL 60187 U.S.A.

Please include a title for your short story, your character name, your real name, and a self-addressed stamped envelope with the address at which you want return correspondence sent. If you are purchasing information or services from the wizard, please clearly indicate what you want and the amount of Legend Points and silver your character is spending. Typed correspondence is preferred. Short stories should be limited to one page if possible.

Your judge, convention coordinator, the RPGA® Network, and the FASA office do not have Threads of Legend character records. These friendly folks will simply send all requests for character records to the above address, so please direct your inquiries to the Great Library.

In closing, we would like to thank all those responsible for helping to put Threads of Legend together. If you have any questions or need clarifications about *Earthdawn* or Threads of Legend, please write.

Good Gaming,

Drew Caldwell
Louis J. Prosperi

❑

Be sure to check out theRPGA Network *Earthdawn* scenario at the GenCon® Game Fair! It will run in slots 6 and 11 in the Deep Dungeon. There will also be an *Earthdawn* Q&A seminar in slot 13B and an Introduction to *Earthdawn* seminar in slot 10A, both located in the West Octagon.

The Living Galaxy

Alternate Histories Redux Again!—Part 2

by Roger E. Moore

Last month, we turned to a specialized area of science-fiction gaming that involves alterniverses. An alterniverse is simply an Earth in which history came out differently, leading to all sorts of bizarre, challenging, instructive, or frightening changes in the world we know. (Think of the "Sliders" TV show on Fox.) By various means in numerous game systems, player characters get to voyage to these alterniverses and experience first-hand their wonders, riches, thrills, and dangers.

In this issue and the next, we will create a few previously undescribed sorts of alterniverses, generated for their adventuring value and (we hope) their great appeal to prospective players. The more intriguing the alterniverse, the stronger the campaign that uses it. Many espionage, detective, military, horror, and pure-SF game systems can support alterniverse adventuring and will be shown here in detail. Gamers who give this option a try might start a real trend in "alternative gaming."

Be aware of one thing, however: Any Game Master considering an alterniverse campaign must have a fair grasp of history—better yet, a love for history. Tinkering intelligently with history makes all the difference in a campaign's success and believability, and the well-read GM has light-years of advantages over a poorly read one. Explore, investigate, examine, absorb, question, and read all the history you can. Knowledge and creativity breed success in all things.

A Plague of Perils

Already the iron door of the north
Clangs open . . .
And a cruel wind blows.
—Stanley Kunitz, "End of Summer"

I watched the movie "The World, the Flesh, and the Devil" years ago, but I still clearly recall one image from the film—that of the sole survivor of a worldwide disaster wandering alone down the empty streets of New York City, old newspapers blowing around him in the wind. It was a terrifying scene, its horror brought out by the understated way in which it was presented.

A dystopian (completely bad and horrible) alterniverse is one to be avoided by any sane person. Universe-hopping characters, however, are always looking for adventure and aren't usually worried about their sanity (except in Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* game, of course). A dystopian alterniverse offers loads of life-threatening situations that could fairly be called "adventures." Sometimes just staying alive on a changed Earth is challenge enough.

Dystopias can (unfortunately) be created in many perfectly reasonable ways: atomic or biological warfare, repressive dictatorships, lethal pandemics, pollution and biosphere collapse, deforestation and atmospheric/oceanic mass extinctions, natural cataclysms such as vulcanism, etc. What if the Axis Powers had won World War II? What if the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. had fought World War III over the Cuban Missile Crisis? What if the Black Death of the 14th century had been even deadlier? Each of these concepts has been explored in recent SF novels and short stories, any of which could serve as a springboard for creating a complete gaming alterniverse. Let's create a few other original possibilities, however, just to prove we can. We'll tie these dystopian worlds to particular role-playing games as well, making use of the core concepts within those games.

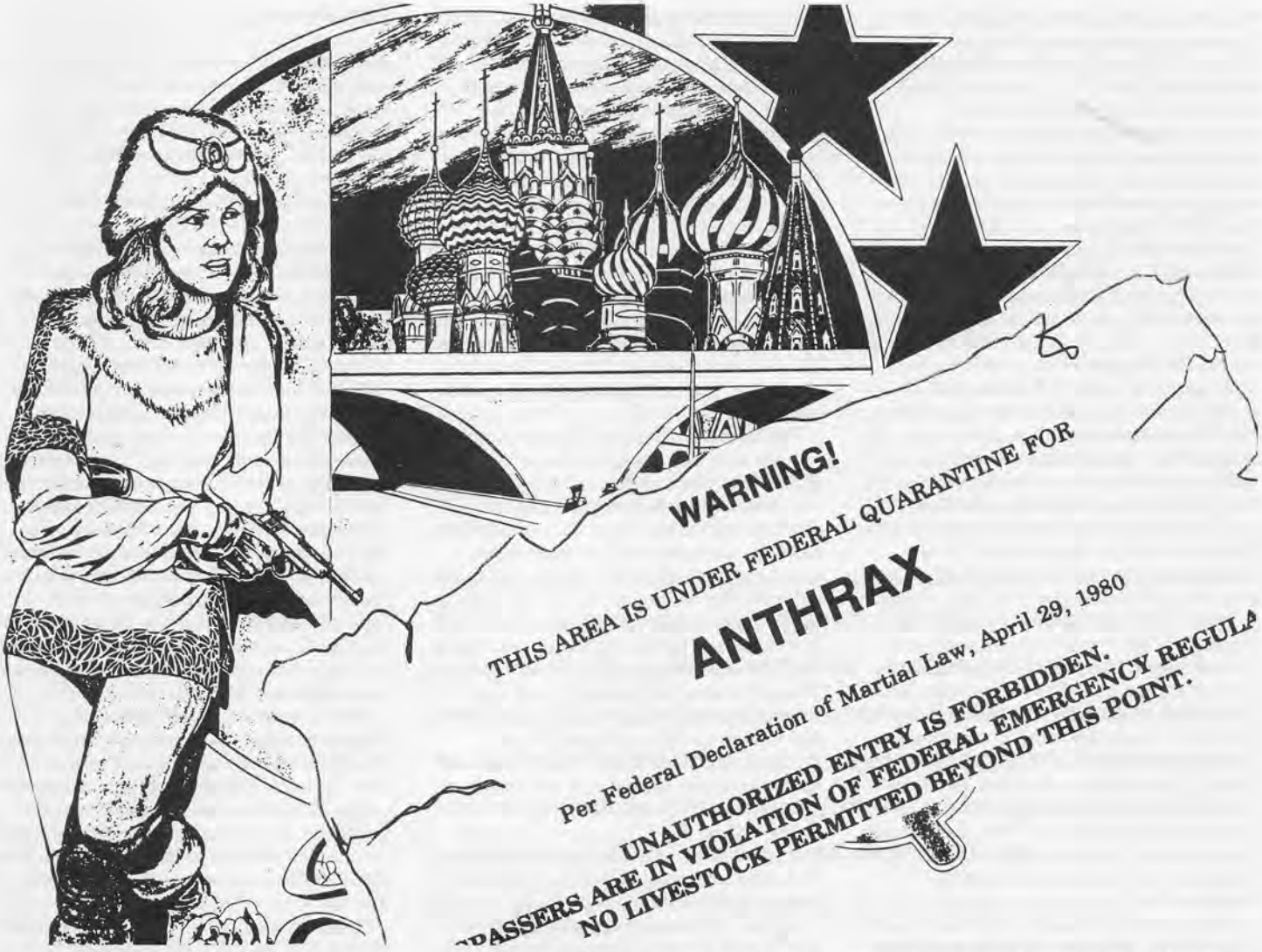
A dystopian...alterniverse is one to be avoided by any sane person...(but it) offers loads of life-threatening situations that could fairly be called "adventures." Sometimes just staying alive on a changed Earth is challenge enough.

Mention of the Black Death brings to mind the thought that disease can be as dangerous to humanity as warfare, even in these days of medical high technology. Indeed, thanks to rapid transportation, diseases can be spread the world over in no time. This point is currently being made in novels like Stephen King's *The Stand*, movies like "Outbreak," and nonfiction books like *The Coming Plague* and *The Hot Zone* (as if the very real threats of AIDS and vaccine-resistant tuberculosis weren't bad enough).

The prospective alterniverse GM might then ask, At what other times was all humanity threatened by pandemics? A little poking through the history books soon reveals several possibilities—and the GM's imagination can carry them on from there.

For instance, let's look at an espionage or commando-action campaign, one based on the Cold War or post-Cold War years (e.g., TSR's TOP SECRET/S.I.™ basic or *Commando* rules, Victory Game's *James Bond 007* system, Steve Jackson's *GURPS Espionage* or *GURPS Special Ops*, Chameleon Eclectic's *Millennium's End* system, or Flying Buffalo's *Mercenaries, Spies, & Private Eyes* game). The GM creates an adventure series involving a secret American project to cross the barrier of time and explore alterniverses, using a titanic matter transmitter built under Death Valley. One research team composed of heavily armed agents and military commandos was sent to an unexplored alterniverse—but no one was in the trailer-sized capsule when it returned to the matter-transmitter chamber. What happened?

The player characters, who we assume are highly skilled and reliable, are called in to go next. After undergoing lengthy medical check-ups and outdoor-survival courses—without a lot of explanation as to exactly what's going on, as the project leaders want to avoid


WARNING!
THIS AREA IS UNDER FEDERAL QUARANTINE FOR
ANTHRAX
Per Federal Declaration of Martial Law, April 29, 1980
UNAUTHORIZED ENTRY IS FORBIDDEN.
PASSERS ARE IN VIOLATION OF FEDERAL EMERGENCY REGULA
NO LIVESTOCK PERMITTED BEYOND THIS POINT.

prejudicing the next team about its survival chances or destination—the team is placed in the large capsule as part of a "matter-transmission" experiment. The agents are to explore the area in which they arrive, record their observations, defend themselves, stay hidden, and return with samples and notes in the capsule one week later. With that, they are sent off in a shower of subatomic particles—to arrive in what appears to be the same spot they left, only now missing all evidence that the matter transmitter and its secret base ever existed.

The team drops out in the alterniverse's version of Death Valley and will certainly be puzzled at the loss of the whole project HQ. They might elect to head in the direction of the nearest town, since they have maps of the area as it exists in 1995. On the way, the agents soon encounter the rusted, ruined remains of automobiles and bits of human and animal skeletons, dead for many years.

Then the GM arranges for the agents to find the body of a lone human, very recently dead from some revolting disease. His tape recorder is damaged, but the tape in it has some audible portions filled with the man's diseased ravings and hallucinations. When lucid, the man says he must reach the matter-transmitter capsule and stop the experiment. No one, he says, must ever come back to this world; it harbors only death. The man was on the first team sent to this world; none survived, but all realized that returning to their home world would almost certainly spread the pandemic to that world as well. The team perished before finding a way to send a warning back without risk of contamination.

The nearest modern town turns out to have been abandoned over two decades ago. Damage from fire, wind, rain, and heat is prevalent, as if the town was simply left to decay on its own. Some houses are boarded up in a very deliberate fashion; entering these homes reveals old books and papers, none dated later than the summer of 1980. Skeletal human remains can be found, many on beds or sofas surrounded by medicines and hypodermic needles, or clutching religious items. Medical pamphlets about "Russian Anthrax," from the U.S. Surgeon General's office, are everywhere.

Old newspaper and magazine articles clarify the situation. An anthrax plague resistant to all known vaccines swept the world from 1979 on, apparently having started in a Soviet germ-warfare lab in the Ural Mountains. The Soviets denied any involvement and blamed the U.S., but the plague was shown to have spread

from Sverdlovsk into the Ukraine and Moscow, and westward along the Trans-Siberian Railway. Within weeks, Eastern Europe and China were hit. China attacked the Soviets with atomic weapons. World War III engulfed Eurasia; perhaps a half-billion people died in the first month. Millions of atomic refugees poured into Western Europe, the Middle East, Japan, Indonesia, Southeast Asia, Australia, and the Philippines, bringing the plague with them. The plague mutated and grew worse. Cattle, pets, and humans—in fact, nearly all mammals—died everywhere the disease went.

Despite a complete shutdown of all transoceanic air and sea transportation, the "Russian Anthrax" pandemic reached the Americas. By then, tens of millions of Americans and Mexicans had fled north into Alaska and Canada, as cold weather was the only thing known to inhibit the disease. Whole cities were abandoned and left to looters, who did not long enjoy their riches.

Details of the disease are well documented, if the exploration team cares to look carefully. (The GM should look up the symptoms of anthrax infection; this version starts with chills after a two-day incubation period, then progresses rapidly to death in another two days.) The mutated anthrax bacteria are able to encyst themselves and survive for long periods of time, remaining permanently dormant only in cold weather and being killed only by extreme heat.

The player characters must now have a good idea of where they are and what exactly has happened. They must want to get home very badly. But one of the agents is getting the chills. . . .

How the agents get out of this mess is up to the GM. News about several major disease-control centers' work to stop the plague might point the PCs toward a major (now empty) city like Los Angeles, but they will have to hurry to reach a place that might have vaccines stored—assuming that a refrigeration unit is still operating after 20 years, and that unit had medicines stored in it that will stop or delay the disease's progress. If the PCs are careful not to infect the matter-transmission capsule, they could send messages back to their own world and ask for help, or signal for help using old short-wave radios. (If they aren't careful, they could unleash the disease on their own Earth!) However, waiting for help to arrive from what's left of humanity, about 30 million people huddled at the poles and on mountaintops, could take a while.

This is a pretty awful alterniverse—and it's based on real history. An accidental explosion at a Soviet military germ-warfare laboratory in Sverdlovsk, U.S.S.R., did indeed happen in April 1979. An unknown number of people caught the disease; some died, and local hospitals were reportedly jammed with the sick. News of the disaster was reported in the U.S. news media in mid-1979; James E. Oberg discusses the incident in detail in his book, *Uncovering Soviet Disasters: Exploring the Limits of Glasnost*. Boris Yeltsin recently confirmed the once-denied disaster and added details.

The Sverdlovsk disaster was a consequence of superpower weapons' rivalries of the Cold War, and its discovery by the West was aided by espionage. An alterniverse based upon this event thus fits the atmosphere of an espionage game system. All that I did to create the alterniverse was to speculate on what might have happened if the anthrax culture released by the explosion had been experimented on to make it deadlier. Though biological warfare work was banned by previous treaties, the Soviets are known to have violated those treaties and could have tried to make a strain of super-anthrax as a bioweapon. Everything followed logically from there. (Note: Sverdlovsk was given its old name of Ekaterinburg after the U.S.S.R. collapsed. Up-to-date agents should know this.)

A good GM should drop in historical bits from the time throughout the game setting, to reaffirm the alterniverse's "reality": accusations by U.S. President Carter or Canadian Prime Minister Joe Clark, denials by Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev, news on the seizure of hostages at the American embassy in Iran, and perhaps attempts to blame the plague on the Iranians, the re-entry of the Skylab I space station, or the Three Mile Island nuclear accident (all 1979 events). The explosion of Mount St. Helens in early 1980 might be viewed by some Americans as a signal of the end of the world. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan would likely not have occurred, and the Mariel boatlift from Cuba might have been turned back forcefully by a plague-panicked United States. No American election would likely be held in 1980, given the great chaos into which the world was plunging. You take it from there.

The Armageddon Cult

And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.

—The Book of Revelation 6:7-8

We mentioned Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* system earlier. What sort of awful but reasonable alterniverse could be presented for this game, or others with a 1920s or horror setting? (For example, TSR's GANGBUSTERS™ game, *GURPS Horror* combined with *GURPS Cliffhangers*, or Mayfair's *Chill* campaign.) We thumb through the history books and learn an awful if interesting fact: One of the deadliest diseases in human history was the 1918 Spanish influenza epidemic, which killed up to 30 million people worldwide (2% of the world's population at the time). It is not widely known that this flu began in the U.S., at Ft. Riley, Kansas. The basic *Call of Cthulhu* game setting is usually in the U.S. during the 1920s. Can a connection be made?

Well . . . what if some deranged Cthulhu cultists had managed to create an even deadlier version of the Spanish flu? Perhaps they used magic, or exposed a flu-infected person to radiation from primitive X-ray devices or radium-laced tonics that were popular at the time. The Spanish flu virus mutates, and then—the world ends. Almost.

A daring GM thus might start a new 1920s' *Call of Cthulhu* campaign by having players roll up characters, buy equipment, etc. Then, just as the game starts, the GM describes the unfamiliar and frightening world in which the characters now live.

The "Spanish flu" (so-named because it was in Spain that its cause was first identified) is now called the "J-D Fever," for Judgment Day. The disease decimated the U.S. Army and Navy, as the flu was spread from post to post by infected soldiers leaving Ft. Riley. The American Expeditionary Force was prevented from fighting in the Great War in Europe. Germany was on the verge of victory when the plague hit; battle lines and armies collapsed within a month. By November 1918, when the pandemic ended, a third of the world was dead. A year later, even more had died of disease and famine. Scenes of unimaginable horror became the norm.

The population of the U.S. in the early

1920s has fallen by half to barely 50 million people. Pretending that her husband Woodrow was ill and bedridden, though he had already died from the disease, Edith Wilson acted as President until late 1919, when the ruse was discovered and emergency elections were held. Hardly anyone voted, and most of the candidates died before the few votes could be counted. Animals as well as people perished from the virus. Farms and crops were abandoned to the wilderness; whole towns and villages vanished. Cities burned, rioters and looters filled the streets, massive common graves were dug, great pyres heaped with bodies were lit, and no one doubted that the end of the world was at hand.

The 1920s are now an era of horror. The resurgent Ku Klux Klan has taken control of some city and state governments across the depopulated Midwest and South. Fighting rages between U.S. Army troops and Klansmen proclaiming a "Redeemed America," and between the Army and starving refugees, many from Mexico. Religious and racial intolerance and paranoia are in full bloom. Blacks, Jews, Hispanics, Europeans, Asians, unionists, Socialists, and Communists are being massacred or driven out of many U.S. communities. New marriages and blended families are now common, but domestic violence is widespread.

Still, the world moves on. Abandoned farms and homes are being put up for sale, dirt cheap, thanks to the Land Redistribution Act of 1922, when emergency elections were held again and the national government was reestablished in Washington, D.C. Leonard Wood, a Republican and the former chief of staff of the U.S. Army, is president. Farm produce and manufacturing are chaotic though slowly on the upswing; autos and radios are still very rare, though guns are common.

Overseas, the Great War in Europe has fragmented into a hundred smaller wars and local battles. Ethnic violence and massacres are commonplace. Fighting over food, land, and medicine burns across Asia, Africa, and South America. Plague-ravaged colonies are being plundered for people, goods, and food to bring the industrial nations back from the abyss. Those with guns eat; those without guns starve.

The player characters can be newspaper reporters, government workers, or what have you. Against this ghastly background, the PCs investigate the spread of bizarre cults across the world, which arose shortly after the plague hit. The cults are all linked to Cthulhoid monsters and encourage further violence and outrages as some sort of preparation for the end of the world. The PCs, through their investigations, find out that the cultists are responsible for causing the flu mutation—but that there might be a way to undo the damage by traveling back in time and destroying the cult in its early stages, in the late 1910s. Perhaps a long trip to the Dreamlands is called for, or a journey to another world or the homeland of an evil godlike being. If the PCs can go back in time and set things aright, they will literally save the world.

Thus the alterniverse serves as the primary setting for the campaign, but it can be "fixed" and wiped out if the PCs do the right things. Normal history will occur instead; there will be a flu outbreak, but not a civilization-killing one.

Let's Go Surfin' Now...

Go, and catch a falling star. . . .
—John Donne

Another dystopian alterniverse we can create (this time, without the plague theme) is one for general sorts of alterniverse games, such as Tri-Tac's *Fringeworthy*, BTRC's *TimeLords*, 54–40' Orphyte's *TimeMaster*, or *GURPS Time Travel* (mixed with *GURPS Cliffhangers*) rules. These games allow for considerable divergences in history, the more unusual the better.

With all the recent media attention focused on the "K-T" asteroid impact in the Yucatán that may have killed off the dinosaurs, and on the cometary collision with Jupiter last year, one wonders if humanity itself might be at risk of extinction in this manner. Could an alterniverse be based on this idea?

Well . . . what if some deranged Cthulhu cultists had managed to create an even deadlier version of the Spanish flu? Perhaps they used magic, or exposed a flu-infected person to radiation from primitive X-ray devices or radium-laced tonics that were popular at the time. The Spanish flu virus mutates, and then—the world ends. Almost.

Where did the ideas come from to build this picture? Some of the history of the real 1918 influenza epidemic came from *The People's Almanac*, by David Wallechinsky and Irving Wallace (see chapter 9, "Natural Disasters," pages 547-8). Possible aftereffects of a great plague were suggested by reading Barbara Tuchman's account of the Black Death in medieval Europe: *A Distant Mirror* (chapter 5).

A number of other American history books recounted the actions of the American Expeditionary Force in World War I; the near-civil war in Oklahoma between the Ku Klux Klan and the federal government; Edith Wilson's role in caring for the stroke-ridden President in 1919; and the use of radium tonics and primitive X-ray devices of the early 1900s. I added a few other elements that seemed to fit the nature of the time, and there you are.

Astronomers have recorded a number of close encounters with celestial bodies in the recent past, such as the fly-by of the asteroid Hermes in 1937, which came about a half-million miles from Earth. A hundred or more kilometer-wide-or-larger Earth-grazing bodies, called Apollo asteroids, may exist. Some of them don't miss, like the bodies that blasted out Meteor Crater in Arizona, the Lake Manicouagan crater in Canada, or the dino-killing K-T Chicxulub crater in the Yucatán. The Tunguska explosion in Siberia in 1908 is thought to have been from a collision with a small comet, and Earth passed through the tail of Halley's Comet in 1910.

Okay, so we know what the K-T strike did to the dinosaurs. What would it have done to us? Let's go back to Hermes and build an alterniverse in which we find out.

It's October 30, 1937. Franklin D. Roosevelt is in his second term as presi-

dent; the New Deal is on. American industry and labor unions are fighting it out on picket lines. The Hindenburg blew up in New Jersey five months ago, right after *Gone With the Wind* won the Pulitzer Prize and just before the Golden Gate Bridge opened. The New York Yankees won the 34th World Series over the New York Giants earlier this month.

But Americans are uneasy. The world is drifting toward war, and everyone sees it coming. Germany is rearming; the Rhineland is occupied. Civil war rages in Spain. Italian troops are fighting in Ethiopia. Japan is warring in China. But in this world's timeline, it makes no difference. Human history has only hours left.

A starlike object now appears in the sky. It grows brighter as people in the Americas, Europe, and Africa watch in increasing numbers, intrigued and wondering. The star falls over the horizon, into the mid-Atlantic, flaring into a great meteor as it does.

A titanic flash of purple light illuminates clouds across four continents. A second burst of violet radiance, an eye-burning shaft of unimaginable energy, leaps up toward the stars. A blue-white fireball that seems to be the size of the Sun peeps over the edge of the world. Shortwave radios suddenly transmit only violent static.

The shockwave from the strike roars outward at Mach 1, in the form of a titanic sea wave hundreds of feet high and a wall of compressed air that hits aircraft like solid rock. The Atlantic Ocean's bed is blasted off the Earth at the impact point, leaving a white-hot crater that reaches down to the mantle. The shock of the strike roars through the Earth, jolting crustal plates. Earthquakes and volcanos beyond normal measurement are triggered.

A few people realize what's happened, grab air flights away from the coasts, and escape nature's wrath—for a while. Mere hours later, the sea wave hits the east coast of North America, roaring inland almost up to the Appalachians. Florida and all Caribbean isles except for the mountains of the Greater Antilles vanish under the tsunami. The Amazon basin turns into an inland sea. Cities and ports on the west coast of Africa and the shores of Europe and the Mediterranean are washed away. The wave goes on to devastate islands and coastal lands even on the far side of the world.

Pulverized rock and live steam fill the atmosphere in vast quantities. Winds far exceeding hurricane speed sweep across the world. Black, sooty rains lash the inlands of every continent. Clouds fill the sky, and the sun fades away behind the dark, gray, turbulent heavens. Typhoons howl over Asia. Cyclones tear at Africa and India. Monstrous hurricanes whip the Atlantic.

A year passes. The winds die down. But the sun is gone. It is cold, and getting colder. Their crops destroyed and cattle slain the world over, the survivors of humanity face the coming of a new Ice Age, as snow begins to fall, and fall, and fall. . . .

So, what are things like when the player characters arrive? That is entirely up to you, the GM. It's impossible to guess all the specifics of mankind's fate, given a vast disruption such as this. You could arrange for glaciers to grow across Canada, Siberia, Scandinavia, and Alaska; new rivers to be cut along the coasts; enlarged inland lakes and seas to be created from the great rainfall and floods; and a human population reduced to only one-quarter what it was in 1937.

Any trace of "civilization"? I'll speculate: Industrial recovery goes on along the Mississippi Valley, Great Lakes, and Pacific coast of North America. New towns are forming along the altered Atlantic coastline. Thanks to poor weather and bad travel, North America is broken up into small nations based on groupings of the old states and provinces of 60 years before: the Republic of Texas, the Union of Pacific States (British Columbia is an ally), the United States of America (most surviving states west of the Appalachians and around the Great Lakes), and the New State of Deseret (Utah under Mormon control). Some northern and eastern states of Mexico are in revolt or chaos. Ontario and Quebec are almost all that's left of Canada, as residents elsewhere have migrated to the Great Lakes to escape falling temperatures and famine. Most of the continent is in relative peace.

Limited contact exists with other continents. European states are slowly reforming, though some (Portugal, Denmark, and the Netherlands) were completely destroyed. Much of France, Ireland, England, Belgium, northern Germany, and southern Sweden are still in ruins, with huge glaciers forming in the Alps and Norwegian uplands. Spain, spared the tsunami by its altitude, is in fair shape, though the German Fourth Reich, spread across central Europe, is stronger and trying hard to reclaim the northern coastal areas. Turkey controls most of what's left of the Middle East. Little is known about the condition of the U.S.S.R.; Moscow radio broadcasts only propaganda and lies. Little wars rage everywhere.

In the Pacific, Japan was savaged by earthquakes and sea waves. The Japanese-dominated nations of Korea, Manchukuo, and Formosa are rebuilding the home islands, but they are in bad straits themselves. Steamships and sailing craft of Japan explore the wreckage of the Pacific, searching for men and materials to rebuild the empire. Numerous wars rage in China and India. Australia, Hawaii, and New Zealand are in contact with the Pacific States; all are concerned about Japanese expansion. Minor trade is carried on with the west coast of South America, but this continent's status remains a mystery.

What can player characters do here? They can set up trade with other alterniverses, render assistance, fight wars, search for old relics, locate survivors, explore changed lands, conduct diplomacy, bring new technology, solve mysteries, and study the aftereffects of the asteroid strike. (The asteroid here is not known as Hermes; it is simply called the Atlantic Meteor or Great Meteor of 1937.) The world's a mess, and a dangerous one—a beacon for only the most daring.

Much information on the aftereffects of an asteroid strike can be found in the *Analog Science Fact Reader*, edited by Ben Bova (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974), in the article "Giant Meteor Impact," by J.E. Enever. The Hermes strike is assumed to be larger than the hypothetical impact Enever describes. Historical information (both here and in other places in this column) comes from Gorton Carruth's *What Happened When: A Chronology of Life & Events in America* (New York: Signet, 1991); I highly recommend this book for any alterniverse gaming.

Related material appears in *Project Icarus*, by the MIT Students System Project (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1979); this book is useful if you want to create an Icarus-strike alterniverse, diverging from our timeline sometime before 1968. Also see Isaac Asimov's *A Choice of Catastrophes: The Disasters that Threaten Our World* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1981), and consult recent articles on the topic in science-fact magazines.

Other Exits to Horror

Obviously, dystopian alterniverses can be created for a variety of role-playing games. A few other short ideas follow.

•The Hot Cold War: GDW's *Twilight: 2000* and *Merc: 2000* games share the same rules but follow different historical paths in the near future; each is an alterniverse of the other. Material could be borrowed from other new-future games to create more Cold War alterniverses for either system; a Communist-dominated future using West End Games' *Price of Freedom* game comes to mind, as does the "Road Warrior" Car Wars world of *GURPS Autoduel* and the nuclear wasteland of Timeline's *The Morrow Project*. TSR's TOP SECRET/S.I. *F.R.E.E.Lancers* or *Commando* rules could use the same ugly alternatives between post-atomic wastelands and Soviet-victorious worlds, offering the F.R.E.E.America supplement as its own alterniverse in return. Interested GMs should also examine the *GURPS Cyberworld* supplement and the timeline of R. Talsorian's *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0.* game. BTRC's *Corps* game and Chameleon Eclectic's *Millennium's End* rules could be used to set up such campaigns.

•Nazis and Nukes: The existence of a Nazi state in Europe in the late 20th century was explored in Robert Harris's novel *Fatherland*, James Hogan's *The Proteus Operation*, Brad Linaweaver's *Moon of Ice*, Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle*, and the Benford & Greenberg anthology, *Hitler Victorious*. Having military or espionage game characters cross over into such a world would make for many sessions of game play if carefully handled; perhaps, however, the Nazis are the ones crossing over into our world. Look especially at GDW's *Twilight: 2000* and *Merc: 2000* systems, TSR's TOP SECRET/S.I. game (regular espionage or *Commando* rules), *James Bond 007* game, *GURPS Time Travel* combined with *GURPS Espionage* and *GURPS Special Ops* rules, BTRC's *TimeLords* game, and Tri-Tac's *Fringeworthy*.

•Killer Cyberscapes: Advanced computer technology could allow creation of virtual-reality games in which players take part in (usually pretty awful) might-have-been battles and wars. Dystopian World War II game-alterniverses could be created for characters in R. Talsorian's *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0.* or Dream Park games, TSR's AMAZING ENGINE® *Kromosome* campaign, Iron Crown's *Cyberspace* world, or SJG's *GURPS Cyberpunk* rules. Game scenarios could involve Operation Sea Lion, the German invasion of Britain in 1940; Operation Olympic and Coronet, the American and British invasions of Japan in 1945-1946; or the proposed Japanese invasions of Australia and Hawaii in 1942-3. Player characters could not be harmed in computer-game scenarios, of course—unless someone had tampered with the equipment, trapping characters in cyberspace wars that maim or kill just like real-world wars.

•Victorian Horrors: A dystopian alterniverse with a victorious American Confederacy was discussed in last month's column, but the late 1800s could be home to numerous sorts of alterniverses, great and small. Consider the early invention of complex computers or atomic weapons (as per *The Difference Engine*, by William Gibson and Bruce Sterling, or Ronald Clark's *Queen Victoria's Bomb*). Consider the aftereffects of England losing its fight against the Spanish Armada, thus not planting the seeds of democracy in North America and leaving control of that continent to dictatorial rule by French and Spanish lords.

You might even create a "bad times" Victorian or Wild West alterniverse rooted in Gothic or Lovecraftian horror, borrowing elements from various current role-playing games: Chaosium's *Cthulhu by Gaslight*; *GURPS Wild West* and *GURPS Horror*; BOOT HILL® game by TSR; TSR's RAVENLOFT® campaign setting, *Masque of the Red Death and Other Tales* (with The Gothic Earth supplement from later this year). Bits of science fantasy can be introduced from the works of Jules Verne, H.G. Wells, and Edgar Allan Poe, as well as from GDW's *Space: 1889* game. Even more bizarre elements (elves, magic, etc.) can be introduced from R. Talsorian's *Castle Falkenstein* game, or from TSR's AMAZING ENGINE *For Faerie, Queen, & Country* rules. (Of course, at this point, you've almost left the science-fiction field altogether). I should also mention the "Tex Arcana" comic that ran in the magazine Heavy Metal some years ago.

You should explore this time period for break-off points—and there are lots of them. Historians believe that American history would have gone much better if Lincoln had not been assassinated in 1865; perhaps our Earth is dystopian by comparison with what might have been. The presidential election of 1876 was hotly contested and unusually close; would the election of Samuel Tilden instead of Rutherford Hayes have made a difference? What if President Garfield had survived his assassination? What if ballistic missiles, poison gas, automatic weapons, radio, or aircraft had been invented and extensively used during the American Civil War, making it more like World War I? (A rather famous short story is based on the ballistic-missile premise, and Harry Turtledove's novel, *The Guns of the South*, covers the alteration of Civil War history by time-traveling radicals from South Africa.)

A last thought: Go to a video store and rent the movie "Time After Time," in which H.G. Wells actually invents a time machine and (to his great horror) explores the modern world. If old H.G. had indeed invented a time machine, how might he have changed his own world to improve it?

•Vietnam Goes Atomic: Palladium's *Recon* RPG focuses primarily on combat in Vietnam in the 1960s. How would things have gone there if Barry Goldwater had been elected president in 1964, and he had carried out the nuclear bombings of North Vietnam he claimed he would do? This theme is touched on in Eileen Gunn's dramatic short story, "Fellow Americans," but much more could be posited. If Communist China or the U.S.S.R. had taken stronger roles early in the fighting, or if atomic weapons had been used, the war could have expanded greatly into a nuclear world war.

Recent newspaper and news magazine articles covering the 20th anniversary of the fall of Saigon sometimes featured speculative thoughts on what might have happened if the U.S. had never entered the Vietnam War or had taken other actions. (See, for example, Gregory Stanford's article, "What if there'd been no Vietnam War?" in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, "Crossroads" section, page 3J, April 30, 1995.) Look over this material and see if other possibilities suggest themselves.

Next month, the last of the great wild alterniverse columns—with a few thoughts creating on a world that came out better than ours.

❑

Classifieds

For Sale/Wanted: Hey Palladium gamers, surely you've played the *Robotech, Robotech II* and *Macross II* games. Well, I'm selling the home videos of those games along with other Japanimation videos and lots of really cool video games (including a good selection of role-playing video games). Also, I want to buy the original "Phantasy Star" Sega Master System role-playing video game, plus a Sega Master System console with all the hookups and controllers. I also want all the boxes, manuals and maps for both the game and system. Send all correspondence (and a SASE with 55¢ postage for info on videos and games) to Peter Bailie, 3463 Galway Rd., Apt 1A, Ballsion Spa NY, 12020, Attn: Polyhedron Inquiry.

Wanted: I am looking for SPELLFIRE™ photo cards. Any card from 401-420, DRAGONLANCE® chase 1-25, or chase 1-25 from the FORGOTTEN REALMS® set. I will trade any cards from 1st Edition or any of the booster pack series. I am also looking for promo card #1 (Legendary Artifact). I will buy or trade with anyone who has these cards. Send your price and/or want lists to: Kevin Gardiner, P. O. Box 1, Whitevale, ON, Canada L0H 1M0. Also, anyone who lives in the Ajax/Pickering Area and wants a club to play in, we are looking for you. We play AD&D® 2nd Edition game (GREYHAWK®, FORGOTTEN REALMS or), *Call of Cthulhu*, and *Toon* RPG. Those interested write to the above address or call 905-294-4384 after 5:00 p.m.

New York: I'm a 23 year old player/DM looking to join a role playing group. I'm willing to alternate playing and DMing AD&D 2nd Edition game, *Middle Earth Role Playing* and/or *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplaying*. I'll travel just about anywhere in Suffolk County, but would prefer the east end of Long Island. I am also looking for a copy of the *Castle Greyhawk* module, preferably in good condition. I can play as often as once a week. Please contact: Eric Campbell, PO Box 81, Quogue NY 11959-0081.

Massachusetts: The Dungeon Explorers, soon to be a Network club, has opened its doors to new members. This extremely flexible club is open to any role playing game. The club meets once a week and we welcome anyone. Curious? Come as a guest! You will not regret it. Our club is based in Lynn MA. If you are interested, please call or write to: James Collura at The Dungeon Explorers, 124 Main Street, Saugus MA, 01906: 617-233-7030. Thanks.

For Sale: A large selection of used, out-of-print TOP SECRET/S.I.™, AD&D game, and D&D® game products. Also selling a variety of Tandy and IBM-compatible video games. For a price list write to: Ryan Staake, 7465 Cement City Rd., Brooklyn MI 49230 or call 517-592-8417.

Club: Join the Nexus, an AD&D 2nd Edition club, on Prodigy. It is a virtual city in a cyberspace community, complete with guilds of all sorts, an underworld, shops and an arena. The Nexus boasts over 70 players, but we welcome anyone who wishes to join! If you're on Prodigy, jump: RPG BB and choose the topic NEXUS. For more information, email David Yeh at RVRC64C@PRODIGY.COM.

Wanted: Help! I need the following 1st Edition AD&D game modules to complete my set (in good condition): C4-*To Find a King*, H1-H4: *The Bloodstone Series*, I2-*Tomb of the Lizard King*, 17-*Baltron's Beacon*, I13-*Adventure Pack I*, I14-*Sword of the Iron Legion*, N2-*Forest Oracle*, N4-*Treasure Hunt*, S1-*Tomb of Horrors*, S3-*Expedition To The Barrier Peaks,* S4-*Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth*, U1-U3: *The Saltmarsh Series*, WG4-*Forgotten Temple of Tharizdun*, WG5-*Mordenkainen's Fantastic Adventure*, WG10-*Child's Play*, WG11-*Puppets*. Also interested in new medieval games or concepts. Write: Jean-Francois Dufour, 1040 Long-Sault #202, Sherbrooke, PQ, Canada, J1E 3K8.

Illinois: I'm an Englishman who's recently moved to Chicago and needs to find an AD&D 2nd Edition game group or club before I get withdrawal symptoms! I'm 29 years old and have both played and DMed for over 12 years. Any dependable group or club please contact Gray Sharpling at 312-258-6183.

Wanted: SSI's *Eye of the Beholder* I and II Clue Books, any D&D modules from these series, B, X, CM, M, IM. For Sale: LL3-*Nightwatch in the Living City*, FRQ2-*Hordes of Dragonspear*, *Creature Catalogues* I, II, III (*Tall Tales of the Wee Folk, Top Ballista, The Sea People*) - unopened. Mark Beeley, Bridport House, Cilcennin, Lampeter, Dyfed, United Kingdom, SA48 8RL.

California: Hello, I am a 22 year old AD&D game player. I am new to role-playing. I am looking to either join or start a group in my area. I would like to play AD&D, DRAGONLANCE setting, *Elfquest*, RAVENLOFT® setting or *Marvel Superheroes*. If anyone is interested, write me at Bobby J. Jones, PO Box 18A409, Los Angeles CA, 90007, or page me at 213-961-4931. All will be answered as soon as possible.

Club: Hello everyone. "The Club" is alive and well. We finished the year with eighty members and we've moved to a new and better location. Our meetings are held along with our Mini-Cons on the first Sunday of every month at the Richfield Holiday Inn from noon until 10:00 p.m. We run two slots of gaming including one LIVING CITY™ event. You can contact us by writing: "The Club", P . Box 3575, Kent OH, 44240 or call us at 216-678-6096.

West Virginia: I am looking for new players and GMs in the Tri-State area. I have my own small group and would like to join a new or existing AD&D group. We play FORGOTTEN REALMS to *Star Trek*. Would like for players and GMs to be 18 or older (experienced players preferred). We can travel so call or write: Daron Palmer, 111 N. 1st Ave., Paden City WV, 26159; 304-337-9240.

Pen Pal: 16 year old (near 17) player/master searching for pen pal (especially a girl) between 15 and 17 years old interested in the AD&D games and books. I'm also searching for ALL the Larry Elmore cards. I want to buy them. If you are interested in selling them, send me your price. Anyone interested should write to: Philippe Dufour, 887 rue du Chanoine Gaudreault, Ville de la Baie, PQ, Canada G7B 3B2.

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Drawing A Paycheck

Art Guidelines for the Newszine

If you are interested in submitting artwork to POLYHEDRON® Newszine, you should become familiar with these guidelines. Get to know the Newszine; our format and interests may differ from other publications in the role-playing industry, and this affects the sort of artwork we prefer to publish. An understanding of role-playing games is also beneficial in helping you tailor your artwork to portray the settings we employ.

Style

We prefer realistic renderings to overly stylized ones. Do not skew body proportions unrealistically. For example, a human fighter can look strong without being four feet wide at the shoulders and layered with muscle. This is equally true for scaling and perspective; a giant should not seem only slightly larger than a human unless it is clearly placed in the background of the drawing.

We are not interested in simple portraits unless we specifically request one. Submitted artwork should show action. It does not necessarily have to be dramatic or violent action, but it should portray the subject of the drawing as doing something in keeping with his character.

The mood of the drawing is also critical. Strive to illustrate the emotions of the subjects of the work as accurately as possible.

Avoid stereotypes.
Not all mages have long, white beards and wear robes; not all knights have thick biceps, wear shining armor, and rescue local damsels-in-distress (besides, this is the 90s–it may be the damsels doing the rescuing); and not all adventuring priests look like an armored Friar Tuck. We would like a fresh look, a new perspective, or innovative subject matter.

Use professional quality art supplies (including paper). Art done with lesser quality materials is often difficult to reproduce.

Any artwork we publish must abide by our ethics guidelines. We will not print any work portraying nudity, sexual situations, sordid acts, or excessive violence or gore. Furthermore, we cannot consider any work that defames current religions or ethnic groups. If you have any questions regarding our ethics guidelines, let us know, and we will send you a copy.

New Artists

The Newszine welcomes art submissions from new artists. However, any new artist desiring to work in the Newszine should first submit a portfolio. This collection of artwork must contain approximately 10-12 samples of pen and ink work no larger than 9" by 12". Unfortunately, we cannot publish color art, so we cannot accept any paintings or slides of such work. Pencil art often does not have sufficient contrast to allow for high-quality printing, so we cannot accept it. If your portfolio contains acceptable work, then at some point we may ask you to do a piece for publication. Because the Newszine is a monthly periodical, timeliness is important. Good quality work that is not turned in on time has as little value as unfinished artwork that does arrive on time.

Rights and Payment

Normally, the Newszine purchases art in one of two ways: Either we purchase it from a portfolio submission, or we request a specific piece on contract. Upon agreement to use a particular piece of artwork, we will send you three copies of a contract, two of which you must sign and return. The contract gives POLYHEDRON Newszine all publication rights to the artwork. You will be paid within 60 days of its publication and our receipt of the signed contracts. All published artists will receive two complimentary copies of the issue in which their work was published. Our rates are as follows: 150 dollars for a black-and-white cover, 40-50 dollars for a full-page black-and-white interior illustration, and a proportional amount for smaller black-and-white interior art.

❑

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California: You could be my new gamemaster or a fellow player. I'm looking for a group of AD&D players to play with. I've been playing AD&D for several years but haven't played recently. I look forward to playing AD&D again with a new group and making new friends. I'm also interested in learning other role-playing games. Call Pauli Santos at 310-329-3877; 440 E. Victoria St., Carson CA, 90746; E-mail ppsantos@scf.usc.edu.

Louisiana: Is there anybody out there? I'm a 16 year old gamer who is looking for anyone who likes RP games. I'm willing to try anything, *Shadowrun*, AD&D, you name it, I'll try it! Please, somebody help me! Write to me at this address: Anthony Lauderdale, 316 S. Pardue, Vivian LA, 71082 or call me at 318-375-5573.

Utah: Looking for network members across the country to start a network The Champions of Fantasy play-by-mail club. We will play low-level AD&D 2nd Edition game campaigns. Please respond quickly, as we are selecting only a limited few! Please send a SASE, along with a short letter describing yourself, and I'll send you the rules and information: The Champions of Fantasy, c/o Sam Sampier, P. O. Box 435, Cleveland UT, 84518.

Maryland: Dragonslayers Unlimited is inviting gamers from around the world to join our unique play by mail gaming club. We have a wide variety of members and are always looking for new and interesting games to play. For more information, contact Dragonslayers Unlimited, c/o Bill Brierton, 12420 Old Colony Drive, Upper Marlboro MD, 20772–5000.

For Sale: POLYHEDRON® Newszine issue numbers 28–34, 44–105. All are in excellent condition. Send me your offers. Jay hafner, 2908 Linden Ave., Slayton MN. 56172.

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Conventions

Origins '95, July 13-16, Philadelphia PA—Celebrating its 21st annual International Game Fair & Expo in Philadelphia PA, Origins will feature over 1000 on-site events, including the *Magic: the Gathering* National Championship and first-run LIVING CITY™ events, with guests of honor including James Lowder, Margaret Weis, Scott Douglas, and countless game designers. Call or write today for your free 96–page color preregistration book. preregistration weekend badge price is $34.95. Write to Andon Unlimited, Origins '95, PO Box 1740, Renton WA 98057-1740. Phone (206) 204-5815. Email: Andon@aol.com.

Grand Game Con 95, July 15 & 16 Grand Rapids MI—Godfrey Lee Middle School, 1335 Lee Street, SW. We are having the following events: RPGA® Network events (LIVING CITY, LIVING JUNGLE™, Virtual Seattle, *Shadowrun,* AD&D® game and AD&D Masters), *GURPS, Battletech, Rifts, Magic: the Gathering* (sanctioned), *Jyhad, Star Wars, Call of Cthulhu,* and more. Doors open at 8 a.m. Events begin at 9 a.m. Admission is $8 for one day, $15 for two. For info or to judge, contact: Leon Gibbons, 13910 Olin Lakes Road, Sparta MI 49345-9524.

Dexcon IV, July 20–23 Somerset NJ—Double Exposure, Inc. once again brings you Dexcon, New Jersey's largest gaming convention, held at the Somerset Raddison Hotel. RPGA Network events include AD&D game, DARK SUN® setting, RAVENLOFT® setting, *Paranoia, Call of Cthulhu,* and *Shadowrun.* LIVING CITY events planned include a three-round feature, a two-rounder, and two single rounds, all first run. There will also be a LIVING CITY Special event for 6th Level characters and higher. Finally, a Masters/ Grandmasters/ Paragon event, as well as a LIVING JUNGLE event will be included. Other activities include war gaming, interactive role-playing, Sugarfest, anime, the famous con suite, and miniature recreations of famous *Star Wars* battles. Visit the huge dealer room and join non-stop *Magic: the Gathering* tournaments. For more information, call (718) 881-4575.

Quincon X, July 21–23, Quincy IL—It's our tenth birthday, and you're invited! Three days of gaming, including role-playing (RPGA Network events), miniatures events (fantasy and historical), card games (*Magic: the Gathering, Jyhad, Spellfire,* etc.), and board games. Auction on Saturday. Rates are $12/weekend, $5/day. For more information send a SASE to: Quincon X, PO Box 3892, Quincy IL 62305–3892.

DarkCon 2, July 28-30, Norman OK—The Southwest's largest gaming club invites you to participate in the hottest event this summer. Darkmoore proudly features the Sixth Annual "Player of the Year" tournament, along with many other fine gaming events, including *Magic: the Gathering* tournaments, historical and fantasy miniatures, RPGA Network LIVING CITY events, and more. For more info, contact Nathan Carpenter, 624 SW 24th, Moore OK 73160. Phone (405) 794-7624.

Action, July 29, Des Moines IA—Come join the Action! The Adventurers of Central Iowa are bringing us a summer convention with their usual assortment of great gaming including *Magic: the Gathering*, AD&D game, *Battletech*, *Star Wars*, *Paranoia*, other gaming events, and a contest or two. There is the added bonus of readily available prizes, video games, food discounts, and free admission for preregistered GMs! Tickets for the event are merely $2 in advance, $3 at the door. For informant contact ACI at 1304 Boyd St., Des Moines IA 50316, or call (515) 266-2358.

Icon III, July 29-30 Edenvale, Gauteng, South Africa—Sponsored by the South African Gamers Association (SAGA), this two–day game and comics fair includes role-playing (AD&D game, *Cyberpunk*, *Castle Falkenstein*, *Call of Cthulhu*, *Elric!* and *Vampire*), LARP, a *Magic: the Gathering* tournament, miniatures demos, and computer games. Other events include miniature painting, art and costume competitions, games auctions, anime, dealers, and a convention dinner. Entrance is R5/weekend, plus a registration fee per event. Please write to SAGA, P.O. Box 965, Kengray, 2100, South Africa for more details.

Ogre-Con, August 11-13, Oklahoma City OK—At the Central Plaza Hotel, 405-235-2761, 1125 Martin Luther King Blvd. Guests include Anthony Ainley, John Peel, P.N. Elrod and Eric Hoffman. Ogre-Con, P.O. Box 300076, Midwest City OK 73140.

RailCon, August 25-27, Lakewood CO—The only convention dedicated to train gaming–no other convention will run as wide a variety of train games. The guest of honor will be Darwin Bromley. The convention will be held at the Sheraton Hotel west of Lakewood, CO. Preregistration costs $30 and covers entrance fee and all event fees. For more info, contact the Train Gamers Association, PO Box 461072, Aurora CO, 80046-1072, or call (303) 680-7824. For rooms, call the Sheraton of Lakewood at (303) 987-2000.

FoxCon '95/Emperor's Birthday Con XIV, September 1-3, Arlington Heights IL—The Elgin Eagles & HMGS-Midwest present this convention. It will be held at the Arlington Park Hilton Hotel at 3400 W. Euclid, Arlington Heights, IL 60005. Events include historical and adventure miniatures as well as role-playing and board games. Registration is $13 for one day, $18 for the whole weekend. There is a $2 discount for HMGS & RPGA Network members as well as a discount for judges. Preregistration is available. For more info, send a SASE to Randy Giesey, 1775 Ashford Circle, Wheeling IL 60090-5100.

Tacticon, Sep 16-18, Lakewood CO—Presented by the Denver Gamers Association, this con will have over 150 events, including *Magic: the Gathering, Star Trek: TNG,* RPGA Network tournaments, the Golden Dagger tournament, art show, miniatures events, auctions, and a figure painting contest. preregistration is $15 for the weekend. For more info, contact the Denver Gamers Association, PO Box 440058, Aurora CO, 80044, or call (303) 665-7062. For room info, call the Sheraton Hotel in Lakewood at (303) 987-2000.

Fields of Honor IV, September 22-24, Des Moines IA—at Howard Johnsons Hotel, Merle Hay Rd and I-80, Des Moines, IA. Admission: $10 for the weekend, $5 per day, $1 visitor pass. Events: wargaming, miniatures gaming, board games, card games (including *Magic: the Gathering* tournament), RPGA events, dealers, and a painting contest. For more info, send a letter to: Fields of Honor, 6501 Douglas Ave, Urbandale IA 50322; or phone (515) 253-0907.

Shorecon '95, Sep 22–24, Ashbury Park NJ—Returning to the New Jersey shore, this convention, sponsored by The Outer Realms and Multigenre, Inc., will be held at the Berkeley Carteret Hotel on Ocean Avenue in Ashbury Park, NJ. Events include board, war, miniatures, Live Action, and role-playing games; comic books; and science fiction events. A full track of RPGA Network and LIVING CITY events will be presented. Other activities include *Magic: the Gathering* tournaments, a dealer's room, game auction, two dances, costuming, seminars, signings, anime, movies, and demonstrations/presentations by historical recreation groups and science-fiction clubs. Registration: $15 preregistered, $20 at the door. Single day rates vary. Write to: Multigenre, Inc., 142 South Street, Unit 9C, Red Bank NJ 07701-2502; email: acd@hotld.att.com or Multigenre@aol.com.

CogCon III, Sep 22–24, Rolla MO—This convention will be held at the Miner Recreation Building at the University of Missouri, located at the northwest corner of 10th Street and Highway 63 in Rolla, MO. Events include role–playing, board, and miniatures games. Other events include miniatures painting contests, charity raffle, and anime. Registration: $8 if preregistered by Sep 10, $10 at the door. Write to: GEAR, PO Box 1939, Rolla MO 65401 or email: gear@albert.nuc.umr.edu.

CapitolCon XI, Sep 23–24, Springfield IL—Join us at the Prairie Capitol Convention Center in Springfield, IL for two days of frivolity, frolic, fantasy and fun! We'll have lots of historical, sci-fi, and fantasy miniatures games; board games of every description, including a number of Puffing Billy events; and lots of role-playing games such as *Vampire, Werewolf, Star Wars,* AD&D game, and more. There will also be RPGA Network events, including LIVING CITY, *Marvel Superheroes,* and *Shadowrun.* Other events include a *Magic: the Gathering* tournament, an auction, a miniatures painting contest, and a few surprises! All this for only $10 for both days. For more info, contact John Holtz, 400 E. Jefferson St., Springfield IL 62701; phone (217) 753-2656.

AndCon, Sep 28-Oct 1, Toledo OH—AndCon, the PBM and gaming experience, has added sci-fi and fandom programming! Gaming features are *Magic: the Gathering* and other CCG tournaments, RPGA events including first-run LIVING CITY events and the largest interactive LIVING CITY event anywhere, *Puffing Billy,* and LARP *Vampire.* Guests include Scott Douglas, RPGA Network Coordinator; Darwin and Peter Bromley of Mayfair Games, Inc.; Frank Mentzer, game designer; and Lee Cerny and Walter Mytczynskyj of Stellar Games. Robin Wood is our Artist Guest of Honor. Paul Brown of RSI is our PBM Guest of Honor. We also feature dozens of board games and miniatures. Preregistration weekend badge price is $24.95. Write to Andon Unlimited, AndCon '95, PO Box 1740, Renton WA 98057-1740. email Andon@aol.com.

Hexacon '95, October 6-8 High Point NC—The largest gaming convention in North Carolina will be held at the Holiday Inn Market Square. Our guests of honor include Tim Olsen, designer of Task Force Games' *Prime Directive*; Tony DiTerlizzi, renowned artist for White Wolf's *Werewolf* and TSR's MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® accessory and PLANESCAPE™ setting; and former TSR editor and designer David "Zeb" Cook. Special events include Charity Merchandise, a Rated-Ace *Star Fleet Battles* tournament (run by Tim Olsen, co–designer of the game system), many RPGA events; a *Magic: the Gathering* tournament with cash prizes; and more. Preregistration costs are $15, and must be received by September 15; the cost is $20 at the door for the weekend. For more information, write to Hexacon (c/o SF3), Box 4 EUC UNCG, Greensboro NC 27412, or call (910) 334-3159.

Dire Consequences III, Oct 6–8, Waterbury CT—This con will be held at the Sheraton in Waterbury CT, and will include three new LIVING CITY adventures, a *Call of Cthulhu* team event, a two–round ranked *Call of Cthulhu* tournament, and Virtual Seattle and LIVING JUNGLE events. There will also be *Battletech* and *Magic: the Gathering* tournaments. Admission is $20 for the weekend. For more info, write to PO Box 251, Bristol CT 06011–0251.

Bay Games, October 13-15, Laurel MD—Bay Games will host tournaments for RPGA Network, the AD&D game, *GURPS,* historical and fantasy miniatures, *Diplomacy, Battletech, Magic: the Gathering* Mox Tournament, *Star Trek* CCG, *Illuminati NWO* and many other game systems. Also there will be special "Live-action RPG" Friday the 13th. Guests of Honor include *Magic: the Gathering* artist Bryon Wackwitz and John Staton, artist for the upcoming Marvel CCG. The convention will be held at the Best Western Maryland Inn. Preregistration memberships are $17 for the weekend, $25 at the door, $12 per day. For information please write to: Bay Games '95, PO Box 883, College Park MD 20741-0883, or email avatar@wam.umd.edu.

InterCon '95, October 13-15, Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada—InterCon '95 will be held at the Kamloops Exhibition Complex. InterCon represents all sci-fi interests. Events will include RPG and miniature tournaments, lectures/presentations and autographs from TSR guests, UFO and unknown phenomena researchers, and movie celebrities. There will also be a large trading area and cinema. Offsite festivities at the Stockman's Hotel; a cabaret style comedy improve group, midnight movies at the Paramount; "Heavy Metal" and "Wrath of Khan". Saturday evening limited tickets for sci-fi theme masquerade banquet and ball. Write to: InterCon '95, 1021 McGill Rd, Kamloops, BC, Canada, V2C 6H4.

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